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ABSTRACT

This chapter, of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's Curriculum Handbook, contains nine papers covering curriculum guidelines for family and consumer science education (FCSE). The following are included: "Executive Summary" (Sharon S. Redick); "Status of Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum" (Ann Vail); "Initiatives, Standards, and Curriculum Guidelines" (Bettye P. Smith); "Family and Consumer Sciences Process-Oriented Curriculum: An Essay" (Ruth G. Thomas); "Implementing Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum" (Patricia Copa, Colleen Mileham); "Principles of Teaching Practice in FCSE" (Janet F. Laster); "What Every Curriculum Administrator Wants to Know about FCSE: Part I" (Cheryl Fedje); "What Every Curriculum Administrator Wants to Know about FCSE: Part II" (Julie Johnson); and "Using a Process-Oriented Approach in Teaching FCSE: A Scenario" (Karen Alexander). (KC)

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A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS & ADMINISTRATORS

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

A Chapter of the

CURRICULUM HANDBOOK

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FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

A Chapter of the

CURRICULUM HANDBOOK

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Alexandria, Virginia USA

Family and Consumer Sciences

by Sharon S. Redick, Ann Vail, Bettye P. Smith, Ruth G. Thomas, Patricia Copa, Colleen Mileham, Janet F. Laster, Cheryl Fedje, Julie Johnson, and Karen Alexander

A chapter of the
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Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum Guidelines

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Executive Summary

Sharon S. Redick

Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) empowers individuals and families to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse, global society. The unique focus of FCSE is on the functioning of families and their interrelationships with work, community, and society.

FCSE addresses the recurring, practical problems of individuals and families. These problems deal with human needs, which have many interrelated and interdependent dimensions. FCSE uses an integrative approach to help individuals and families identify, create, and evaluate goals and alternative solutions to significant problems of everyday life, and to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

Introduction

The content area long known as *home economics* has experienced a dramatic transformation over the past 20 years. When Marjorie Brown published *A Conceptual Scheme and Decision-Rules for the Selection and Organization of Home Economics Curriculum Content* in 1978, she stimulated a series of writings that dramatically changed the thinking about curriculum in home economics. So great has been Brown's influence, that now this area of study has a new name: Family and Consumer Sciences.

Brown's writings, and those she coauthored with Beatrice Paolucci, began a movement that generated dialogue and reflection about what family and consumer sciences ought to be. Many experts have examined and critiqued Brown's work, further expanding the dialogue and debate about the definition, mission, focus, and curriculum for family and consumer sciences.

Brown and her adherents encouraged moving away from the traditional technical approach—teaching students expert ways to perform household tasks such as cooking and sewing—toward the adoption of a critical science approach: helping students learn to think, reason, reflect, and take action through the study of recurring, practical problems. This approach empowers individuals and families to examine recurring, practical problems such as What should I do to nourish myself and my family? What should I do to manage my resources? What should I do to nurture my children and family members? What should our family do to improve educational opportunities in our community?

The process of asking such questions and finding their answers is known as the *critical science perspective.* It requires an approach to curriculum that is process oriented—which means that for students, the *process* of studying questions and finding answers is as important as the

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answers. Using a critical science approach aligns family and consumer sciences with other subject matter areas such as integrated language arts and social studies—which also embrace a process-oriented curriculum.

Over the past twenty years, many states have adopted the critical science perspective as the basis for curriculum reform and renewal in family and consumer sciences. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oregon, and Nebraska provided the initial leadership in this curriculum reform movement. Many states followed, though some have chosen to use other approaches, such as competency-based or concept-based approaches to curriculum development. The guidelines offered here are based on the critical science perspective, which calls for a process-oriented family and consumer sciences curriculum.

Forces Shaping Family and Consumer Sciences Education Curriculum

Societal concerns. Economic issues; health issues; teenage pregnancy; and a larger, aging population affect individuals and families in a variety of ways. Each factor has an impact on the content and audience of FCSE programs.

Concept of family and family functions. Most individuals in our society move in and out of various family forms (two parents, single parents, blended families, empty nesters, dual income, single income, newly married, elderly) throughout their lifetime. FCSE educators are challenged to prepare learners not for one type of family, but for an ever-changing, ever-evolving family.

National and state legislation. From the initiation of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 and continuing through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, federal legislation has had a strong influence on the FCSE curriculum. The standards set forth in this legislation were followed by vocational FCSE programs, and these programs served as models for nonvocational programs. States typically offer FCSE at the middle and high school levels and often include specific courses in consumer education; parenting; life management, skills, and planning; nutrition; and family education. State mandates related to academic standards, competency-based education, assessment, and accountability also affect the FCSE curriculum.

Philosophical foundations. The current philosophical perspective is based on critical science theory. Characteristics of this philosophy include valuing human relationships that are equal and cooperative, respecting wisdom embedded in all cultures, and viewing natural sciences as one among several avenues of inquiry to valid knowledge and understanding.

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Nature of knowledge. From a critical science perspective, FCSE is a problem-oriented field in that its knowledge base is generated by concern with an area of human problems—the recurring, practical problems of home and family. The content of the curriculum includes both concepts and processes. Although problems tend to be complex and interrelated, they can be categorized around concept areas and processes. The concept areas are family, human development, interpersonal relationships, parenting, nutrition and wellness, and family and consumer resources. The processes are practical reasoning, interpersonal reasoning, leadership, creative problem solving, and management.

Technology. Technology is part of the content in the FSCE curriculum because of its effects on individuals and families. Technology also affects both the content and delivery of the FCSE curriculum because it assists teachers and students as they seek valid information in examining practical problems.

National and state standards. New national standards for FCSE were published in spring 1998. Most states have academic standards that include FCSE. Some states have specific performance standards for FCSE.

Learning theory. FCSE curriculum is process oriented and based on a combination of cognitive science and social reconstruction orientations, allowing for relevancy, integration, and response to the unique needs of each student. Embedded in this curriculum are characteristics of constructivism: The curriculum is problem centered, it draws upon the context of the situation, and helps students connect ideas so they can construct new solutions to real-world problems.

The Future—What We Can Expect

- Many states have adopted the critical science perspective for FCSE curriculum; many more will do so.
- New FCSE national standards will soon be in place and will influence the FCSE curriculum.
- Societal concerns will elevate the need for individuals and families to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse, global society. FCSE programs will help students meet these challenges and may provide leadership in meeting these needs.
- Demographics suggest that the population will become increasingly diverse; minority populations will become majority populations, and local communities will affect and be affected by global forces. These changes will bring increased diversity to classrooms and call for increased attention to community concerns from a global perspective.

- Decreasing national funding will cause FCSE to increasingly rely on state and local funding. Less funding for programs designated *vocational* will likely increase the programs designated as *general*.
- As a result of decreasing funding from both national and state levels for curriculum leadership, it is likely that FCS professional organizations will assume more leadership in this area and thus exert more influence on the FCSE curriculum.
- FCSE programs are likely to play an increasing role in work-force education through service learning and mentoring experiences.
- The linkage of education, health services, and social services through school systems will provide more opportunities for FCSE programs to help meet the needs of individuals and families.
- Advanced technologies that link home, school, and community resources will result in more effective teaching strategies.
- Increasing collaboration with community, business, and industry will enhance relevance and continuity between FCSE curriculum, the home, and the workplace.
- Increasing standards for both academics and the workplace will influence standards in the classroom.
- Increasing demands for accountability and assessment will help make strong, effective FCSE programs more visible.
- Preparing competent, innovative thinkers and future leaders will become an increasing priority for school systems and FCSE programs.

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Status of Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum

by Ann Vail

Introduction

Family and consumer sciences education (FCSE) promotes individual and family well-being by providing educational experiences that enable individuals to develop, integrate, and apply a multidisciplinary body of knowledge in dealing with the basic and higher level needs of individuals and families. Brown, a leading proponent of the critical science perspective, proposed the following purposes for all FCS areas:

> To enable families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action that lead to (1) maturing individual self-formation and (2) enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them. (Brown and Paolucci 1979, p. 23)

The Family and Consumer Sciences Division of The American Vocational Association recently developed this vision and mission statement:

> Family and consumer sciences education empowers individuals and families across the life span to manage the challenges of living and working in a diverse, global society. The unique focus is on families, work, and their interrelationships (1994).

In striving toward this latter vision statement, the American Vocational Association specified their mission and goals for family and consumer sciences education:

> The mission of family and consumer sciences education is to prepare students for family life, work life, and careers in family and consumer sciences by providing opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed for
>
> 1. Strengthening the well-being of individuals and families across the life span.
>
> 2. Becoming responsible citizens and leaders for family, community, and work settings.
>
> 3. Promoting optimal nutrition and wellness across the life span.
>
> 4. Managing resources to meet the material needs of individuals and families.
>
> 5. Balancing personal, home, family, and work lives.

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6. Using critical and creative thinking skills to address problems in diverse family, community, and work environments.

7. Achieving successful life management, employment, and career development.

8. Functioning as providers and consumers of goods and services.

9. Appreciating human worth and accepting responsibility for one's actions and success in family and work life.

Historical Foundations

Family and consumer sciences education began evolving in the United States in the mid-1800s. By the beginning of the 20th century, family and consumer sciences had developed a formal structure. Since that time the field has changed a great deal; however, remnants of the last century and a half remain in some curriculums. Some of these remnants are still appropriate when adapted to modern times, but some have lost their relevancy in the face of technological changes and new knowledge. Originally identified as domestic science, then home economics, and now as family and consumer sciences, the subject has developed along several themes.

Originally, domestic science was conceived as education appropriate for women. Around the turn of the century, with the industrial revolution in progress, it became an area of study focused on the application of science for improving basic household functions. As demands for a skilled workforce grew, domestic science became known as home economics, and assumed a skills training perspective as promoted by the early vocational education movement. Home Economics was included in the Smith Hughes Act of 1917—the first piece of vocational education legislation. As the United States experienced the Depression and World War II, home economics began to emphasize household management. The focus was to improve the quality, influence, and effectiveness of households in social and economic terms (Thomas 1986).

Over the past few decades, home economics centered its focus on family development, though this was always a basic concern. But emphasis had shifted from the technical aspects of running a household to the communicative aspects of nurturing families as a unit and as individuals within families. The goal was to strengthen the family, thereby enhancing human development. In the 1970s and '80s, home economics expanded beyond the traditional area of preventive programming and became involved in intervention efforts dealing with such audiences as teen parents, drop outs, and special-needs students (Thomas 1986). In 1994, the profession changed its name to *Family and Consumer Sciences*.

Programs in Family and Consumer Sciences

Traditionally, the family and consumer sciences curriculum has been divided into two categories: family-oriented and occupational/career-oriented programs.[1] Family-oriented programs focus on the work of the family which includes balancing family, work, and community; caring for self and others; and managing resources. These programs may be broad and interdisciplinary or focused and specifically related to a subject matter area. In the new National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences, family-oriented programs are reflected in these key areas:

- career, community, and family connections
- consumer and family resources
- family
- human development
- interpersonal relationships
- nutrition and wellness
- parenting

Occupational and career oriented programs prepare students for paid employment in careers related to family functions—the work of the family that has moved to the marketplace. For example, caring for children is part of the work of the family, yet that work has also been supported by the marketplace through child care centers, preschools, and community recreation centers.

- Consumer Services
- Early Childhood, Education, and Services
- Facilities Management and Maintenance
- Family and Community Services
- Food Production and Services
- Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation
- Housing, Interiors, and Furnishings
- Textiles and Apparel

All of the standards, whether family-oriented or career-oriented, require students to apply the process of **reasoning for action.** Both the family-oriented and occupational and career-oriented areas are grounded in the same foundational knowledge. The application and use of that knowledge occurs in different contexts with differing resources.

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[1] Since the FCS guidelines in this document are directed toward the family-oriented programs, unless otherwise indicated, the terms "family and consumer sciences" and "family-oriented programs" will be used interchangeably throughout.

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For a variety of reasons, most FCS programs at the secondary level are family-oriented programs. Almost all states have occupational/career programs, but the number of programs vary greatly by state. Because a critical component of occupational/career programs is a linkage with related business and industry, these programs tend to be in geographical areas where the local business community can support the educational program and provide adequate employment opportunities for program completers.

Issues

In this dynamic, evolving field, curriculum developers will find it necessary to examine and resolve several issues according to local perspectives.

■ Changing Families and the Effects on Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Most discussions about changing families focus on the changing forms of families—more single-parent families, with many headed by men; more blended families including his children, her children, their children, or the former spouse's children; more dual-income childless families, and more single persons with no children. Although some people find it easy to blame the problems of families and society on the changes in family form, the fact is that most of us will move in and out of a variety of family forms throughout our lifetime. The challenge of family and consumer sciences educators is to prepare learners not for one type of family, but for an ever-changing, ever-evolving family.

Rather than focus curriculum and instruction on a one-size-fits-all approach, family and consumer sciences educators enable learners to identify and draw upon various resources as they face the variety of challenges with which they must cope. Curriculum and instruction of this nature should focus on family functions, family strengths, and family resiliency. Knowledge from such a program enables learners to answer the recurring, practical problems of individual and family life. Such programs help learners balance family, school, work, and community life.

Programs should analyze family changes from a socioeconomic perspective. In the past few decades, many families have maintained their standard of living by postponing marriage, requiring both spouses to work, having fewer children, or going into debt (Coontz 1997). The impact of the changing economy on families and family functions will continue to merit attention in effective family and consumer sciences education.

In response to changing families, support is growing for public education to include parenting and family-related instruction. "Programs on child development should be incorporated into high school classes, so that young people will begin to learn what parenting is all about. Supportive, well-structured schools can also make a tremendous difference for children from single-parent homes and from step families (Coontz 1997 p.172)."

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Adults are not the only ones advocating more congruence between school curriculum and life outside school. In a survey of U.S. teens, they indicated that schools are only doing an adequate job in teaching skills necessary for a responsible and productive life. Only 27% of teenagers rated their schools as helping them "a lot" in specific life skills (Schultz 1989).

■ State Mandated Curriculums

As the need for family and consumer-related education is identified by state legislatures and state boards, more of these groups are implementing public policy designed to require schools to include content that has traditionally been taught in family and consumer sciences. For example, the Iowa State legislature has enacted legislation requiring content related to human growth and development. In Iowa, this content may be taught by family and consumer sciences educators. The Iowa State Board of Education has required family and consumer sciences education for all middle school/junior high school students.

Florida requires all high school students to take a Life Management course. South Carolina requires parenting to be taught in family and consumer sciences education programs. The Idaho Board of Education requires consumer education to be taught to all high school students. Family and consumer sciences classes meet this requirement.

Family and consumer sciences educators are uniquely positioned to teach such curriculum because of their broad, interdisciplinary preparation in areas related to well-being of families. Health-related content taught by a family and consumer sciences educator is taught within the context of family functions, and emphasizes family communication, family decision-making, and problem solving. The focus is on the interrelatedness of the content to families and on making decisions about what is best for me, my family, and my community. The same content taught in other areas often has a narrow focus on technical information related to that content and fails to take into account the complexity of information and the role of the entire family in decision making.

■ Relationship to Vocational Education and General Education

Since the early part of the 20th century, family and consumer sciences education (known then as home economics education) has been a vital part of vocational education with a focus on essential skills, usually those involving handwork. Other vocational education areas focused on skills related to paid employment, while family and consumer sciences focused on skills related to the work of home and family. Still intimately connected to vocational education, family and consumer sciences education has expanded beyond the traditional skills orientation.

Today, the essential elements of FCSE can be viewed appropriate for all students. Areas such as building on family strengths; providing nutritional meals; parenting; and managing time, energy, and money are essential for

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all students. Rather than being seen as having a separate place in the overall school curriculum (usually considered to be elective courses) in which some students participate, FCSE ought to be viewed as part of the foundational knowledge of all students' educational experience.

Occupational FCSE has maintained and enhanced the earlier relationship with vocational education. Occupational FCSE has experienced many of the changes that have had an impact on all areas of vocational education. Integration of academic proficiencies, school-to-work transition programs, and tech-prep initiatives are part of most FCSE occupational programs.

Impact of Family and Consumer Sciences Education: What Does Research Tell Us?

Numerous research efforts document the impact of FCSE programs in secondary schools. Although conducted in different states at different times, research indicates that FCS programs do contribute to students being better prepared for individual and family life roles. The following statements summarise several studies.

- Students with two or more semesters of FCS instruction perceived themselves to be more competent in performing the minimum program competencies required in FCS programs in Iowa than did students with one semester or less of instruction. Therefore, FCS programs are effective in increasing the perceived competence level of students who enroll in two or more semesters of instruction (R.T. White 1997).

- A one year follow-up of secondary FCS graduates in Florida and North Carolina indicated that 76% of the graduates were using what they learned more than a year ago in nutrition, parenting, and consumer education (Gritzmacher, Tooke, Pestle, Clawson, Johnson, and Baum 1990).

- In an Illinois study of program outcomes, researchers concluded that program graduates considered family and consumer sciences concepts to be very important to them in their adult lives with the areas of highest importance being parenting, adult living, resource management, child development, and food and nutrition. In this same study, those graduates enrolled in a specific family and consumer sciences content area perceived themselves as having significantly higher competence levels in that content area than those who had not taken a specific course in the content area (Winsor, Cote, and Griswold 1990).

- Jenkins-Vulgamore and Laster (1992) found that the decision-making skill levels of seventh-grade family and consumer sciences students could be improved with three months of FCSE decision-making instruction and practice.

- Using an Ohio statewide testing program of FCS courses in Personal Development and Resource Management, White found that students made significant gains in scores on these valid and reliable tests after one semester of FCSE study (R.A. White 1997).

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Recommended Readings

Because of their direct application to practitioners, the following publications are recommended for their usefulness to current educators. (Other research-oriented publications are available, but are not included in this list.)

What Is Home Economics Education? by Marjorie Brown

This benchmark document on the conceptualization of Home Economics (now Family and Consumer Sciences) provides an in-depth discussion on why this field should adopt a critical-science perspective.

"The Family and Consumer Science Curriculum" by Sharon S. Redick

This chapter in *Content of the Curriculum*, published by ASCD, and edited by Alan Glatthorn, provides an overview of the development of family and consumer sciences education including a discussion of major curriculum and instructional issues in the field.

Home Economics Concepts: A Base for Curriculum Development

Published by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, this publication provides conceptual frameworks for many of the content areas within family and consumer sciences. Includes a discussion of three curriculum perspectives and how they relate to the field.

Yearbook Series—American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

Each year, in conjunction with Glencoe Publishing, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Technology Division publishes a yearbook focused on a current initiative or topic in the field. Written by classroom teachers, teacher educators, and state supervisors, these publications address current issues and present practical suggestions for using the knowledge in the classroom situation. Recent yearbooks include the following editions.

- *Inquiry Into Thinking*. (1998). Ruth Thomas and Janet Laster, eds.
- *Thinking for Ethical Action in Families and Communities*. (1997). Janet Laster and Ruth Thomas, eds.
- Review and Synthesis of Family and Consumer Sciences Education Research *1985–1995*. (1996). Sharon Redick, editor.
- Perspectives of Occupational Home Economics. (1995). Susan Weis and Susan Olson, eds.
- The Education of Early Adolescents: Home Economics in the Middle School. (1994). Frances Smith and Cheryl Hausafus, eds.
- Marketing Home Economics: Issues and Practices. (1993). Edna Page Anderson and Virginia Clark, eds.

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- Lives and Plans: Signs for Transforming Practice. (1992). Linda Peterat and Eleanor Vaines, eds.
- *Work and Family: Educational Implications*. (1991). Ginny Felstehausen and Jerelyn Schultz, eds.
- Looking Toward the 21st Century: Home Economics and the Global Community. (1990). Sally K. Williams, Dorothy L. West, and Eloise C. Murray, eds.

Monograph Series—Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association

Published annually, the monograph series is for classroom teachers. Topics cover current issues confronted by family and consumer sciences teachers. Monographs include practical, research-based strategies for classroom use.

- *Cultivating Our Garden: Serving Students with Learning Disabilities in Family and Consumer Sciences*. (1996). Ann Vail and Valerie Mandilaff.
- *Teaching Strategies to Facilitate Learning*. (1995). Cathleen Love, Barbara Nelson, Gene Gloeckner, Dawn Mallette, and Sally Yahnke.
- *How Do We Know They Know?* (1994). Vicki Lowe and Lou Howell.
- Balancing Family & Work. (1993). Sally Yahnke, Dawn Mallette, Cathleen Love, Emma Gebo, Ginny Felstehausen, and Dorothy Pomeraning.
- *Developing a Positive Self-Concept*. (1992). Shirley Slater and Lee Cibrowski.
- *Motivating Youth at Risk*. (1991) Sharon Redick and Ann Vail.
- *Higher Order Thinking: Definition, Meaning and Instructional Approaches*. (1987). Ruth G. Thomas, ed.

Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Published by the Family and Consumer Sciences Division of the American Vocational Association, this research journal is devoted to family and consumer sciences education.

Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences

Published by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, this is a research and practice journal related to all aspects of family and consumer sciences.

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Initiatives, Standards, and Curriculum Guidelines

by Bettye P. Smith

Initiatives

Practical Problem-Based Curriculum.

Since the early 1980s, Family and Consumer Sciences Education has generally departed from a technical orientation, and joined the movement toward problem-based curriculum. The focus on practical problems arises from the work of Brown and Paolucci, and other scholars who have influenced this critical science perspective. FSCE curriculum materials and guides developed by Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon have a problem-based approach, and other states are currently developing or adopting curriculum based on this approach.

Meeting the Needs of Special Populations.

Meeting the learning needs of special populations is considered an integral part of FCSE. This includes, but is not limited to, students who are at-risk, teen parents, pregnant teens, students with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency. Federal legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 requires service for special populations.

FCSE has responded to this legislation by continuing to serve these populations and improving curricular offerings. For example, with the increasing number of pregnant school-age young women, many programs are focused on meeting the needs of this at-risk population. GRADS (Graduation, Reality, and Dual Role Skills) is a family and consumer sciences in-school secondary program aimed at keeping pregnant teens in school until graduation. Developed in Ohio, the program won national awards and has been widely disseminated and adopted through the National Diffusion Network. Virtually every state has provided professional development experiences for preparing FCS teachers to meet the needs of special populations.

Integrating Academic and Family and Consumer Sciences Education.

Integrating academic and vocational education involves blending skills from several disciplines—English, mathematics, science, or social studies—and presenting them in the "hands on" instructional styles of vocational courses. A primary goal of integrating academic and vocational education is to make the experience of applied vocational education more

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accessible to academic students while offering advanced courses to students concentrating in vocational education (Clark 1992). It is well documented that the integration of basic skills into the FCSE programs has been successful (Miller and Tullock 1995).

■ National Standards

Published in spring of 1998, national standards for FCSE were developed through a project sponsored by the National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences, an affiliate of the American Vocational Association. This project involved five phases of development that included research, data collection, and analysis; input from focus groups; development; validation; and dissemination.

The standards document includes comprehensive standards for sixteen categories of family and consumer sciences education content, including those that are family oriented and those that are career oriented. Each comprehensive standard is further delineated with content standards, competencies, academic proficiencies, process questions, and systems of action. The process questions are organized into categories of thinking and reasoning, communication, leadership, and management; actions are organized into the categories of technical, interpretive, and emancipatory actions. The comprehensive standards follow:

■ Career, Community, and Family Connections

Integrate multiple life roles and responsibilities in family, work, and community settings.

■ Consumer and Family Resources

Evaluate management practices related to human, economic, and environmental resources.

■ Consumer Services

Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in consumer services.

■ Early Childhood, Education, and Services

Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in early childhood, education, and services.

■ Facilities Management and Maintenance

Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in facilities management and maintenance.

■ Family

Evaluate the significance of family and its impact on the well being of individuals and society.

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- **Family and Community Services**

  Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in family and community services.

- **Food Production and Services**

  Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in food science, dietetics, and nutrition.

- **Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation**

  Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in hospitality, tourism, and recreation.

- **Housing, Interiors, and Furnishings**

  Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in housing and interiors.

- **Human Development**

  Analyze factors that impact human growth and development.

- **Interpersonal Relationships**

  Demonstrate respectful and caring relationships in the family, workplace, and community.

- **Nutrition and Wellness**

  Demonstrate nutrition and wellness practices that enhance individual and family well-being.

- **Parenting**

  Evaluate the impact of parenting roles and responsibilities on strengthening the well-being of individuals and families.

- **Textiles and Apparel**

  Integrate knowledge, skills, and practices required for careers in textiles and apparel.

Note: Overarching and intersecting all of the standards is a process standard regarding students' use of **reasoning for action**: *Uses reasoning processes, individually and collaboratively, to take responsible action in families, workplaces, and communities.*

State Standards and Guidelines

Many states have produced curriculum guidelines and academic standards for FCSE programs. An exemplary document recently developed by Wisconsin is based on a critical science perspective, and includes topic, content standard, and performance standards at the introductory,

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intermediate, and advanced levels of study. Wisconsin's topic areas and content standards:

- **Continuing Concerns of the Family**

  Students in Wisconsin will understand the meaning and significance of the broad, continuing concerns of the family.

- **Family Action**

  Students in Wisconsin will understand and use reasoned action to address broad, continuing concerns of the family and to accomplish family goals.

- **Personal and Social Responsibility**

  Students in Wisconsin will assume responsibility as family members and citizens, and take informed, socially responsible individual, family, and community action.

- **Work of the Family**

  Students in Wisconsin will understand and actively use specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to creating conditions in the family and society to accomplish the work of the family.

- **Learning to Learn**

  Students in Wisconsin will reflect on their thinking, manage learning tasks, evaluate their work, monitor their progress and attitudes toward learning, and set new learning goals.

Guidelines for Developing Practical Problem-Based Curriculum

A problem-based curriculum is emergent in nature. This means that the details of curriculum planning are developed as instruction proceeds. The following guidelines, each of which is discussed within this *Handbook* chapter, help in preparing an emerging, problem-based curriculum framework.

- **Consider** the mission of FCSE.
- **Review** and use national standards for FCSE.
- **Consult** state standards and guidelines.
- **Identify** appropriate content areas to be taught using Brown's decision rules:
  - In selecting content, **determine the recurring practical problems** in the home and family, culture, and society.

- To promote quality home and family life, **identify basic valued-ends concepts** consistent for each problem, which are in turn consistent with desirable quality of life.
- To help people solve recurring practical problems, **identify the concepts involved in solving each problem:**
  - Processes
  - Environmental conditions
  - Personal and cultural contexts
  - Alternative means and consequences of those means
- To help students make increasingly critical, creative, and morally responsible decisions, and solve recurring, practical problems, **identify the concepts that are built into the curriculum learning processes:**
  - Self
  - Interpersonal relations
  - Modes of thinking

- **Involve** learners, parents, and appropriate community members in program development.
- **Consider** the contextual factors impacting curriculum such as
  - families, their potential and problems
  - learners and their development
  - knowledge relevant for FCSE
  - issues and developments in education
  - issues and developments in FCSE.
- **Formulate** mission for the local program, school and community.
- **Review** learning theories.
- **Examine** strategies appropriate for practical, problem-based curriculum.
- **Allow** for learners to be actively involved in the emerging curriculum.
- **Plan** for authentic assessment.
- **Participate** in professional development activities that increase skill and understanding of the critical science perspective, problem-based curriculum development and teaching, and authentic assessment.

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Family and Consumer Sciences Process-Oriented Curriculum

An Essay

Ruth G. Thomas

Philosophical Transitions

The curricular perspective that has emerged in Family and Consumer Sciences over the past 20 years is known as a *critical science* approach. This approach reflects characteristics identified by curriculum theorists as *postmodern*—a world view that is now unfolding in developed nations. The following postmodern characteristics (Slattery 1995) also characterize Family and Consumer Sciences:

- Human relationships are cooperative and equal rather than coercive, individualistic, and patriarchal.
- The wisdom embedded in all cultures (and peoples) is respected rather than seeing Western cultures (and professionals) as superior.
- Natural science is seen as but one among several avenues of inquiry rather than as the sole route to valid knowledge and understanding.

The scholarship of Marjorie Brown has provided a philosophical basis for much of the critical science-focused FCS curricular work in the United States during the same time period. Brown has argued that FCS knowledge goes beyond technical knowledge and includes interpretive and critical perspectives:

- Technical knowledge is concerned with factual information and with means to given ends.
- Interpretive knowledge is concerned with meanings and interpersonal communication of meanings.
- Critical knowledge is concerned with ideologies and interests underlying the structures and organization in society and their implications and consequences.

In addition, concern with these perspectives in FCS is action-oriented. Consequently, the field seeks to

- Achieve already agreed upon goals through technical action.
- Pursue understanding and facilitate deliberation of norms and meanings regarding families through communicative action.
- Help families identify consequences of the ways their lives are organized and structured, and otherwise influenced by the larger culture;

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and act to change cultural, family unit, and personal patterns that prevent achievement of goals and fulfillment of responsibilities through emancipative action.

Recent FCS curriculum theory and models reflect sensitivity to cultural variation. These approaches seek to support families' capacities to critique culture and to work together transform its problematic elements as well as those problems they identify within themselves. Understanding and developing intellectual capacities for complex thinking have received increasing attention in FCS education research, curriculum, and teacher education in response to

- increasing centrality of critique and interpretation of meanings in FCS philosophy
- a rapidly changing culture that has confronted families with increasingly complex problems.

FCS educators have generated conceptual models of

- significant, enduring problems and concerns of the family
- practical reasoning
- curriculum that emphasizes application of intellectual capacities in examining and addressing family concerns.

Integrative Perspective

Since the formal inception of FCS at the beginning of the 20th century, it has reflected an integrative perspective with various interpretations of the word "integrative." For example, some pioneers in the field envisioned their main goal as bringing together the various domains of knowledge in the study of the family and improving its condition. This idea is still reflected in today's FCS curriculum. Its focus has turned to integrating the study of the family with other school subjects, academic knowledge, and real life pursuits and problems.

Another view of integration reflected at the turn of the century was that of the mutual relationship between the individual and the family, and between the family as a social unit/ institution and the larger society. This integrative perspective suggested that one could not understand the individual without understanding one's family context. Likewise, adequate understanding of the family is not possible without an understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts within which the family exists, and the family's interaction with these contexts. This perspective also exists at present and is reflected in the FCS mission, discussed below.

A more recent integrative perspective derives from the emphasis that has developed in the last twenty years on practical problems of families as the kind of problems with which FCSE is concerned. Practical problems, or *continuing concerns* as they are sometimes called, raise questions of value, of socio-historical context and meaning, as well as questions regarding

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what action should be taken. Such questions reflect the three kinds of knowledge and the three kinds of action identified earlier as characterizing critical science-focused FCS. The practical problems perspective encompasses and integrates the following:

- knowledge, thought, and action
- values, meanings, and information
- intellectual, social, and action processes

It is this practical problems perspective that has undergirded much of the curriculum work in the field since the late 1970s.

Mission

FCS is concerned with the family as an intimate human environment that significantly influences, and is influenced by its members and the larger society and culture. Although the field has formally existed since the early 1900s, (known until 1994 as home economics), a continuing struggle between more technically-oriented perspectives[2] and more philosophical-social-critical ones[3] culminated in the formation of a mission statement in 1979 based in the critical science perspective. This mission statement highlights and reaffirms the focus of the field on the family as well as a commitment to a conception of knowledge that includes interpretive and critical perspectives as well as technical ones:

> To enable families, both as individual units and generally as a social institution, to build and maintain systems of action which lead (1) to maturing in individual self-formation and (2) to enlightened, cooperative participation in the critique and formulation of social goals and means for accomplishing them. (Brown and Paolucci 1979, p. 23).

In making its own contribution to the FCS mission, FCSE is concerned with supporting families in developing their capacities to identify, create, and evaluate goals and alternative solutions to significant problems of everyday life, and to take responsibility for consequences of their decisions for the global society and environment.

Practical Problems

FCS is concerned with practical problems of the family—described in the FCSE literature as complex and perennial, and as recurring and continuing concerns. They reoccur rather than being resolved once and for all. For example, parents may need to rethink what it means to nurture

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[2] Technical perspectives are focused on actions to achieve given ends; ends or goals are not examined or critiqued.

[3] Philosophical-social-critical perspectives are concerned with examining actions and goals, and critiquing the framework of beliefs underlying them for validity and consequences for all affected.

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children as children grow and develop, as the family's context may change from one geographic location to another, and as each new generation of parents contemplates the same questions their parents wrestled with, but in a new time and under different circumstances. FCS has adopted terms such as *perennial problems* and *continuing concerns* for the areas of broad, continuing concern to families upon which the field focuses and within which a number of more specific practical problems are embedded.

Practical problems are ill-structured, requiring as much or more effort in problem finding and in problem formulation as in problem solving. Knorr and Manning (1997) sum up the nature of practical problems of the home and family:

- problems occur as complex, evolving wholes (rather than coming neatly packaged and labeled with a clear definition of what the problem is);
- problem contexts change (contexts are dynamic rather than static);
- the effectiveness of solutions is relative (there is no one right answer and the criteria for judging solutions often need to be developed);
- problem solving often involves groups (since the solution to one person's problems often has consequences for others); and
- consequences of problem solutions matter (consequences have significant rather than unimportant implications).

It is the concern with consequences for others that gives FCSE's approach to problem formulation and problem solution a moral and ethical nature. This means that students are helped to understand that the decisions they make about and within the family context have implications for other members of their families and, in many cases, for the broader community. This moral/ethical aspect, its socio-personal orientation (as opposed to personal or socio-civic) (Strom 1986a), along with the varied kinds of knowledge, knowledge organization and perspectives required to deal with practical problems, make FCSE unique among other school subjects that may also include family-related concepts (e.g., health, social studies).

Learning Theory

In keeping with the philosophical orientation outlined in the previous section, FCS challenges students to critically interpret knowledge. Learning is not so much a matter of content to be learned, but is instead a process of working with others to identify problems and figure out what knowledge is relevant and how it can be developed and acted upon in addressing a problem.

Learners bring their past experiences and knowledge, their concerns, interests, abilities, talents, and perspectives to the learning process. All of these have something to contribute to the learning experience of the group. By introducing various perspectives into the learning process, assumptions

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and biases are uncovered and perspectives are broadened. This intellectual and social process is believed to be critical in a rapidly changing society.

Teachers are facilitators who set the stage for learning. The learner's responsibility is to participate in the learning process, contribute to others' learning, and direct his or her own learning whenever possible. By introducing material and problems, the teacher stimulates thinking and questions on the part of learners. The teacher responds to learners' concerns and helps them explore problems that they introduce. The teacher provides a supportive structure and resources that allow learners to engage in intellectual and social processes they have not yet learned as they construct knowledge relevant to the issue being explored.

Curriculum as an Emergent Process

A practical problems approach t[illegible]urriculum must be emergent in nature. An emergent approach to curriculum means that the details of curriculum planning are developed as instruction proceeds. Like knowledge, emergent curriculum has a constructivist orientation; it is constructed by teacher and learners together, rather than being received, intact, from an external authority.

A practical problems-oriented approach to curriculum begins with identifying a problem or question. To address significant questions and solve everyday problems, students and teachers assume roles as co-investigators, accessing or developing knowledge because of its relevance to the problem. Curriculum emerges from joint inquiry, entailing guided rediscovery of existing knowledge, reaching mutual understanding, and creating and reorganizing knowledge. In this process of guided inquiry, knowledge is created socially rather than being "dished out" for student mastery (Staaland and Strom 1996).

Students examine problems from several viewpoints, including

- The current state of affairs relative to the problem or question;
- The context (historical, social, economic, political forces and events; interests of groups and persons) that has given rise to the problem or question;
- A desired state regarding the problem or question, and reasons that justify the desirability envisioned in terms of valued ends;
- Knowledge available or that needs to be developed that bears on the situation, including knowledge about means through which movement toward the desired state might be facilitated;
- Assessment of the consequences to self and others of alternative actions identified; and
- Coming to a conclusion regarding what actions to take.

Students explore these aspects as they are relevant, and not necessarily in a particular sequence.

Together, teachers and students plan how they will access or develop knowledge. Because the knowledge determined to be needed may not be known, emergent curriculum is oriented to finding out, inquiring, creating, and making judgments about what is believable and doable instead of emphasizing skills, facts, and how-to's determined ahead of time by the teacher alone (Laster 1987; Southers et al. 1990). This emergent practical problems approach engages students in intellectual and social processes that require practical reasoning; through this experience, students learn a proactive stance toward their lives, integrating emotional and intellectual aspects of their lives with learning (Southers et al. 1990).

Practical Reasoning

Practical reasoning, the process for examining practical problems of the family, is central to the critical science-focused curriculum in FCS. Practical reasoning entails going back and forth among the three categories of knowledge and action—technical, interpretive, and critical—outlined at the beginning of this essay. Scholars define practical reasoning as a continuously evolving, skilled, intellectual and social process that

- links categories of knowledge—valued ends, context, means, and consequences,
- is used in forming judgments about the best course of action to take in a particular situation,
- integrates reasoning, acting, and learning (Knorr and Manning 1987; Strom 1986a).

Practical reasoning requires students to identify values and factual reasons in making decisions. Practical reasoning should acquaint students with multiple perspectives on a problem. Students in FCS should learn to examine the legitimacy of their judgements using interpretation and reasoning; they should draw conclusions about what is best to do to solve the problem, both in terms of what will work and what is morally defensible (Strom 1986b). In this model, practical reasoning requires

- knowledge of values and the world;
- the capacity for complex, high-level thinking processes;
- willingness to reason with others; and
- sensitivity to long-term and moral consequences of actions (Laster 1987).

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Beliefs About Process-Oriented FCS Education

Several assumptions underlie the practical problem-based, process-oriented approach to FCS curriculum and instruction:

1. Family life is significantly related to other arenas of life.

■ A student's family life affects work life and civic life; these in turn affect family life. When students understand these mutual reciprocities, they are more able to intelligently govern their choices and actions in all of these arenas.

■ Families play a significant role in the development of human beings and citizens. To the extent that families develop their capacities to nurture their members, contribute to their communities, and influence the development of communities that are supportive of families' well-being, society at large benefits.

■ The degree to which families develop their capacities to identify, create, and evaluate goals and alternative solutions to significant problems of everyday life and to take responsibility for consequences of their decisions, has far-reaching implications for the workplace and society.

2. Working with practical problems of the family by engaging in practical reasoning is a capacity that is learnable through educational means.

3. The moral and ethical dimension of practical problem-based, process-oriented FCS helps students develop a sense of responsibility.

4. Practical-problems, process-oriented FCS is relevant for all students regardless of socio-economic status, college and career plans, or kinds of school curriculum pursued. All students come from and experience a family in some form during their lives. Reasoning capacities relevant to, and understanding of, this complex and challenging life context do not "come naturally" as is often assumed. This extensive body of content knowledge is usually not learned outside of formal educational settings.

5. Because it is important for students to understand the practical reasoning process relevant to and used by people in real life, practical-problems process-oriented FCS should incorporate real problems from students' actual experiences.

6. Teaching in ways that enhance practical reasoning requires teachers to engage in the very processes they hope to help students learn. Teachers who have been prepared to focus their teaching on knowledge acquisition will need time and support to reorient their perspective to the role of content as something to think with rather than as something to be acquired; and to the role of students as users and developers, rather than absorbers, of knowledge.

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7. Practical reasoning and recurring, broad areas of concern to families provide a framework for developing FCS curriculum, for teaching-learning processes used with students, and for content.

8. Teachers' participation in curriculum formulation is important if what is developed is to be attuned to their settings. Students' participation in curriculum formulation is important if what is developed is to be attuned to their needs.

Topics, Materials, and Curriculum Development

FCS curriculums developed over the last fifteen years have outlined perennial problem areas faced by families across time and history. One outline of these continuing concerns includes the following:

What should be done about

- family, food, and society?
- family and jobs?
- family and technology?
- family work and careers?
- parents and children? (Staaland and Strom 1996).

Another FCS curriculum identifies the following as perennial problems of families (Ohio Department of Education 1983):

- coordinating work and the family
- nurturing human development
- feeding and nourishing the family
- creating a living environment
- meeting clothing and textile needs of family members
- economics and managing resources

Although these two curriculum outlines have broad appeal, no agreed-upon, definitive set of perennial problems or recurring concerns of families has been identified to date.

Subproblems, *practical problems*, or *related concerns* are terms that denote the elaboration of family perennial problems. For each broad area of concern, students identify embedded subproblems by engaging in practical reasoning. They raise questions about how the area of concern came to be, its consequences, what significant goals or values the problem might prevent a family from realizing, and the means for bringing about a better situation. By considering these questions, subproblems within the area of concern are revealed as are broad concepts embedded in the subproblems. The subproblems and the broad concepts become the organizational

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structure and content for the curriculum. This same process occurs among groups of professionals developing curriculum and in classrooms where teachers and students engage in practical reasoning about broad areas of concern to families. The following list presents subproblems that curriculum developers have identified as embedded in the first broad areas of concern.

Perennial problem/continuing concern: What should be done about family, food, and society? (Staaland and Strom 1996)

- Subconcern I: Why should people be concerned about food, its meaning and ways of obtaining and using it?
- Subconcern II: What should families do regarding the development of food attitudes and norms?
- Subconcern III: What should families and society do about food consumption patterns?
- Subconcern IV: What ought to be done about getting food?
- Subconcern V: What action should individuals, families, and society take in regard to food-related concerns?

Perennial problem/continuing concern: Coordinating work and the family (Ohio Department of Education 1983)

- Subconcern I: Income procurement
- Subconcern II: Management of economic resources
- Subconcern III: Effects of family on work
- Subconcern IV: Effects of work on family
- Subconcern V: Interaction between family and work

In the first set of subconcerns above, food attitudes and food norms are broad concepts embedded in the subconcern, "What should families do regarding the development of food attitudes and norms?" In the second set of subconcerns, curriculum developers have identified broad concepts of commitment to work and family scheduling; family values, goals, and priorities; resources for management; nurturing family relationships; and support systems.

These problem frameworks are intended as illustrative rather than prescriptive. In other words, teachers and students are encouraged to develop their own perennial problem/continuing concerns frameworks, or to adapt those found in curriculum guides so that they emphasize unique aspects of families' circumstances in a local area. Typically, curriculum guides provide support materials that offer suggestions for how teachers might engage students in practical reasoning about broad areas of concern and their embedded subconcerns and concepts. Recommended assessment of student learning provided in FCS curriculum materials is increasingly authentic and performance-based.

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In summary, FCS curriculum guides assemble resources that might be used by teachers and students in exploring more specific questions and practical problems related to an area of broad, continuing concern to families. These materials stimulate, support, and provide a repository from which educators may select those activities that best suit their needs. Teachers share the problems, categories, or questions with students to stimulate their thinking about more specific problems they might wish to examine or other questions they might wish to raise.

Assessment

A practical problems, process-oriented approach to FCS necessitates assessment of processes. It should determine how well students can use the practical reasoning process to identify and investigate practical problems of the home and family, and formulate defensible, responsible actions. Such assessment must be clear about what it is that reflects adequate understanding and competent use of practical reasoning. Criteria for assessing student learning might include

- shows insight about continuing concerns of the family
- recognizes family situations that reflect practical problems and in which the practical reasoning process is relevant
- works with others to identify and investigate practical problems and identify action to address them
- takes reasoned action to solve continuing concerns of the family
- accepts the value of reflective action in directing and assessing one's own learning
- shows interest in assuming responsibility as a family member-citizen
- actively uses concepts related to work of the family
- shows critical awareness of self-defeating patterns of thinking and acting (Staaland and Strom 1996).

Assessment of these capacities should include student self-assessment as well as assessment by teachers and appropriate others. Self-assessment reflects the FCS orientation toward learners becoming directors of the practical reasoning process and of their own learning. Because practical reasoning is a social as well as intellectual process, assessment should also focus on the degree to which students engage in practical reasoning with others.

All of this requires the evaluator to understand the nature of practical problems and of the practical reasoning process. Along with performance assessments or other kinds of authentic assessments, descriptive rubrics are helpful for both students and teachers. An example of such a rubric appears in Figure 1.

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Figure 1

Sample rubric for assessing one aspect of the criterion, "shows insight about continuing concerns of the family."

5

Identifies family problems as broad, recurring problem areas; can relate more, specific day-to-day family issues to broad, recurring problem areas.

3

Identifies some family problems at broad, recurring problem areas, and others at a specific day-to-day family issue level without distinguishing the difference. Does not seem aware of the difference.

1

Does not identify family problems, or identifies only specific day-to-day family issues without connecting them to broad recurring family-problem areas.

Approaches that generate information for assessing practical reasoning include:

- interviews (Thomas, Anderson, Getahun, and Cooke 1992)
- in-depth observations (Rehm 1987; Rowley 1989)
- participant observation (Knippel 1989)
- stimulated recall (Cooke 1988, 1989)
- tab item (Anderson 1989)
- open-ended situation analysis (Edersheim 1988; Martin 1988; Thomas and Englund 1990, 1991)

In addition, Laster, Mathews, and Manifold (1998) have compiled a list of tools that are relevant for assessing different aspects of practical reasoning.

Summary

Practical problems-focused, process-oriented FCS curriculum emphasizes the use of practical reasoning in identifying and investigating practical problems of the home and family, and formulating action to address such problems. Practical reasoning is a social and intellectual process that is embedded within life activities and contexts, and integrates qualities and states of persons (dispositions, knowledge), dialogue among persons, and action.

Given this integrated perspective, the teaching of practical reasoning is not viewed as developing a set of skills, but is seen as encouraging a way of being, and as facilitating a combined intellectual, moral, personal, and social development process. In studying the complex concerns of families,

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the FCS curriculum encourages the formulation and enactment of thoughtful, deliberate, and morally defensible actions.

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Implementing Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum

Patricia Copa and Colleen Mileham

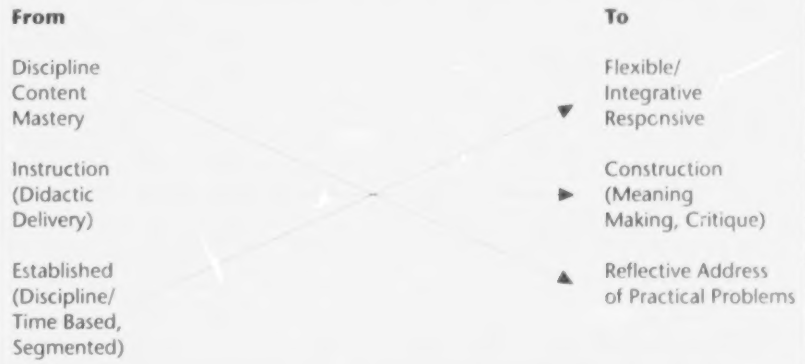
Principles of Learning in Process-Oriented Family and Consumer Curriculum: A Model of the Learning Experience

Given the nature of learning, the role of learners, and the process of instruction described in Ann Vail's essay, Status of Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum, beginning on p. 6, a substantially different learning model underlies the FCSE process-oriented curriculum. For example, if real problems that students experience serve as a focus for their study, traditional content-defined curriculum guides have limited utility. If students are viewed as active participants in learning—using and critiquing their present ways of knowing/acting—then teacher-delivered content and instruction are not appropriate. If practical problems are complex, evolving wholes that involve socio-personal as well as moral-ethical dimensions, study from a single program perspective (rigidly organized and isolated) limits complete understanding and responsive action.

Three components of a student's total learning experience, as redefined in the process-oriented FCS approach, are charted in Figure 2. The model

Figure 2

Process-Oriented Curriculum: A Model of the Learning Experience


From
To
Discipline Content Mastery
Flexible/ Integrative Responsive
Instruction (Didactic Delivery)
Construction (Meaning Making, Critique)
Established (Discipline/ Time Based, Segmented)
Reflective Address of Practical Problems

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4. Adapted from Copa, P. M. et al. (1992). *New Designs for the Comprehensive High School*. Berkeley, Calif.: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Used by permission.

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contrasts traditional concepts of learning expectations, processes, and organization with the *interacting* and *emerging* nature of FCS curriculum.

■ ***Learning Expectations.*** A learner-centered focus values levels and kinds of knowledge and skills developed through the learning experience. Whereas some conceptions of FCSE may focus on mastery of content within such traditional areas as clothing, foods and nutrition, family and child studies, housing and design, a FCS process-oriented approach envisions students who can use information from these areas to reflectively address the practical problems of individuals and families. Expectations for students specify

- knowledge, thought, and action;
- values, meanings, and information; and
- intellectual, social, and action processes needed to function successfully in families, communities, and the paid workplace. Considering the complexity and seriousness of current and future dilemmas in these settings, these learner expectations need to be rigorous, useful across diverse settings and times, and held fast for *all* students.

■ ***Learning Process.*** The special nature of learning expectations found within the FCS process-oriented approach, as well as the uniqueness of different learners, guide the design of the learning process. Whereas the traditional learning process frequently takes the form of teachers delivering and students receiving information, the process-oriented approach supposes active and reflective students creating meaning and making connections through a responsive learning process that considers and values their individual life goals, backgrounds, dispositions and learning styles, cultures, and socioeconomic situations.

■ ***Organization of Learning.*** In supporting learning expectations and processes, the organization of learning departs from practices that evolved through tradition, vested interests, and happenstance. It includes such disparate elements as schedules, graduation requirements, student groupings, teacher licensure, department structures, resource distribution, community relations, and building design. Decisions about these areas are practical problems in themselves and require serious deliberation about what should be done to achieve the goals of the process-oriented learning approach.

Certain critical assumptions underlie the Process-Oriented Learning Experience Model.

- Implementing process-oriented approaches in FCS curriculum does not represent an "all or nothing" situation, but is a process. Different schools and programs are presently in different stages, but all are able to change and grow.
- Pieces within the process are part of a dynamic whole. Each affects and is affected by what is happening with the others.

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- In actual schools, the learning experience process is more than a theoretical model. It is dynamic and filled with uncertainties, political realities, personalities and attributes, and socio-economic forces within and outside of schools (e.g., real practical problems).

- In moving toward a school's goals for the FCS process-oriented curriculum, it is necessary to address many different areas at the same time, while capitalizing on special opportunities and resources as they present themselves.

- Working toward goals for a FCS process-oriented curriculum should be viewed as a *learning experience* itself. Perhaps more may be learned from "failures" than from successes. *This is a process!*

Students and Learning Expectations

Educators nearly always work toward goals and outcomes. Often these outcomes take the form of class or course goals with mastery of specific content. Graduation requirements are a form of goals, often specified in numbers of credits or years of study. These outcomes often focus on acquiring externally defined knowledge and specific facts.

By contrast, the FCS process-oriented curriculum assumes that complex and rapidly changing situations that families encounter makes specific facts and other objective information minimally useful across time and situations. As Reid (1979) and others have noted, most dilemmas facing contemporary individuals and families are "unclear and moral" in nature, that is they are unique in context, not amenable to quick or "right" fixes but necessitate action, characterized by conflicting elements and permeated by ethical considerations.

The practical reasoning process emphasized throughout this chapter encompasses an approach that has the potency to address these unclear, moral (practical) problems effectively and justly. As such, the processes of practical reasoning offer guidelines for proposing different kinds of learning expectations for Family and Consumer Sciences, expectations that are likely to prepare students to successfully navigate their present and future worlds.

Learning expectations informed by practical reasoning include various kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing—as well as goal-directed ways of using this knowledge. The FCS process-oriented approach assumes that, among other expectations, students will

- Frame significant areas of human concern by weighing existing conditions against desired states of affairs.

- Develop goals (valued ends) that are ethically defensible.

- Analyze the special historical, sociocultural, political, and economic conditions in which particular situations are found.

- Weigh different courses of action and their anticipated consequences against desired outcomes or valued ends.
- Justify a chosen course of action in terms of appropriateness for particular conditions, options and consequences and desired ends.

Implicit in such learning expectations are special conceptions of students, their nature, and their potential. Of special importance among these views are that students

- are able to reflect on their own and others' thoughts and actions, as well as on the impact these have for individuals and society.
- are enriched by the contexts of which they are a part (e.g., life goals, backgrounds, personalities and learning styles, cultures, socioeconomic situations).
- are characterized by stage-distinctive ways of focusing on and processing their experiences at different points in their development.
- are capable of engaging in continuous lifelong learning, self teaching, and growth in complexity and principled reasoning.
- are able to draw on a variety of problem solving strategies, and envision multiple probable consequences.
- are motivated by a desire to improve their own lives and the lives of others through contributing to the common good.
- are able to engage in reflective dialogue and learn through experiences and interactions with others.

Students and the Learning Process

The critical science orientation to family and consumer sciences requires a focus on process teaching. This orientation supports the growing recognition in education that process skills are critical in helping students find meaning in their learning. Process as content perspective helps students construct answers to the questions:

- What am I learning?
- Why am I learning it?
- How will I use the information in my own life?

Process-oriented learning helps students make connections between learning and the reality of their lives. The ability to use process skills helps students confront problems that may have no definitive answers. Acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself does not prepare students to deal with the complexity of human problems facing families.

The process as content perspective in family and consumer sciences does not diminish the importance of subject matter, but subject matter is an outgrowth of the practical problems that students address. In the

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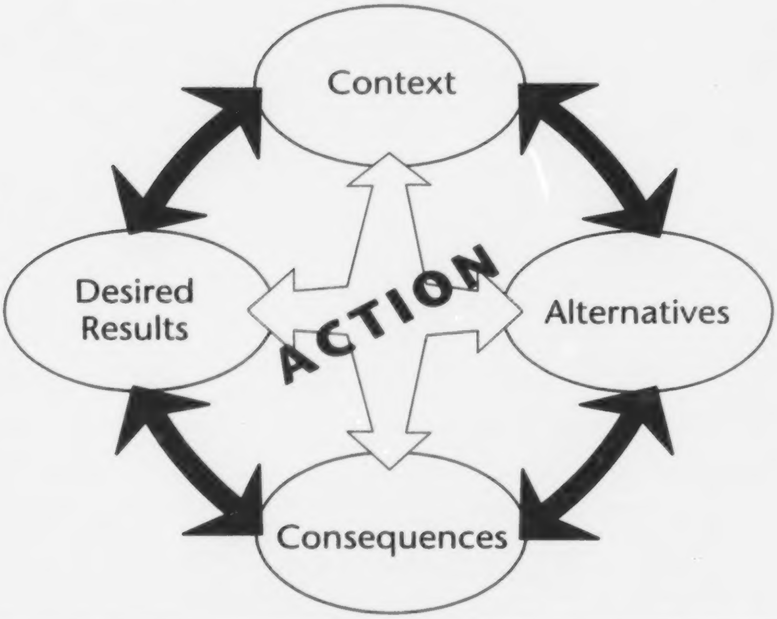
process-oriented approach, students examine real-world problems of families, critically think, reflect, and propose reasoned action to resolve the problems.

Because this curriculum orientation is based on real-world concerns of families, the practical reasoning process provides a means for identification and resolution of concerns. Teachers, rather than functioning as disseminators of information, become facilitators in helping students understand the complexity of problems. The practical reasoning process involves students in learning and creating meaning in a participatory manner. Students are active participants in considering the *context* of a specific problem affecting a family, the *desired* results, the *alternatives* available for problem resolution, and the potential *consequences* of various alternatives. In determining what *action* should be taken, students consider the interests of all those affected by the problem. Students strive toward understanding their personal contributions to the common good and the meaning behind building a sense of community. Practical reasoning involves informal dialogue, researching new information and reflection on individual thought and action. The following model illustrates the interrelationship of the practical reasoning elements.

Figure 3



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Tenets for Decision Making in Process-Oriented Curriculum and Instruction

The challenge of what to teach and how best to teach in family and consumer sciences is a continuing dialogue. However, in a critical science orientation to family and consumer sciences, schools can be guided by a set of tenets for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Curriculum

■ The family and consumer sciences curriculum focuses on recurring concerns or questions facing families (e.g., What should I do about nurturing children? What should I do about human development at various ages and stages of life? What should I do about managing work outside the home and family responsibilities?)

■ The recurring concerns of families that frame curriculum relate to life outside school, and seek to develop knowledgeable citizens capable of succeeding in their personal, family, and work life.

■ Content is developed beyond a traditional subject matter approach. Reasoning processes, including scientific and practical reasoning, critical thinking skills, practice in interpersonal communication, and opportunity for reflection are also considered. Generally, family and consumer sciences programs at the middle school and high school levels frame recurring concerns of families around predetermined core areas of study (e.g., managing work and family responsibilities, parenting, resource management, nutrition). Specific subject matter emerges from the recurring concerns needing to be addressed in the core areas. Core areas of study provide a framework for teaching and communication with students, parents, and community members.

■ Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum must be viewed in the context of the school system. How does family and consumer sciences contribute to the overall education of students? The curriculum (i.e., students' expectations, learning processes, and subject matter necessary to resolve the recurring concerns of families) draws on a range of content and integrates well with other subject matter areas across the school curriculum.

Instruction

■ Effective instruction promotes complex thinking and social skills. As teachers assist students in constructing knowledge relevant to recurring concerns of families, they act as facilitators of learning rather than conveyors of information. The practical reasoning process helps students become more active in their own learning. By developing the ability to draw on multiple problem solving strategies, envisioning a range of alternatives and consequences, and taking reasoned action, students become more flexible thinkers in responding to life problems.

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- Concerns of families are complex, requiring knowledge and inquiry from several disciplines. The practical reasoning process requires students to make connections among subject matter areas. When examining the context in which a concern arises, and determining a course of action, students must integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines—economics, social psychology, history, sociology, language, biology, chemistry, and anthropology.

- Developing curriculum and instruction around the recurring concerns of families requires time. To help students construct knowledge, examine, and critically reflect on the complexity of real-life problems, teachers should emphasize depth over breadth of coverage.

School Environment and Organization

For lasting curriculum improvement, it is critical that expectations, processes, and organizations are in *alignment* with one another. By themselves, changes in structures, processes, and facilities do not necessarily promote the vision and goals of a family and consumer sciences process oriented curriculum. But when schools are ready to re-examine the traditional organization of settings, time periods, learners, teachers, and procedures, they can mobilize options for a rich array of strategies and organizational structures that support learning expectations and processes.

Decisions about learning environments are *practical problems* in themselves, requiring judgments about action. Such situations involve diverse human and other elements that are unclear, unknown, and continually changing and interacting with one another. These decisions rest in specific social, historical, and political settings. They involve weighing and evaluating competing values and goals. Consequences are unpredictable in terms of projecting exactly what will happen if alternative actions are taken. However, it is imperative that decisions about organizations and environments be approached seriously because they have important consequences and there is reason to believe that what is decided can lead to better states of affairs for all involved.

Thoughtful administrators, other educators, students, their parents, and community partners need to engage in a reflective practical reasoning process to consider their own special valued ends or goals in light of the particular conditions that constitute their unique settings. Following are some examples of questions that help frame a process-oriented curriculum:

If the family and consumer sciences process-oriented curriculum focuses on the *connection of learning to life*—

- What should be the relationship of schools to the community and to those who work with families in the community?

- How and where should learning experiences and projects be developed and worked on? Who should be the "teachers"?

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- How can students test their theories and hypotheses in real life settings?

If the family and consumer sciences process-oriented curriculum supposes ***in-depth investigation*** and *collaborative study* of multiple (and "just in time") sources of knowledge—

- How should schedules be arranged to allow extended periods of time as they are needed?

- Are there ways that long-term projects can be facilitated?

- How are grading and assessment procedures adjusted to support teamwork?

- How do students access the human, technological, and other resources (in school and out) needed to inform their study?

- What are the best ways for school spaces to be arranged to support in-depth investigation and collaborative study?

If the family and consumer sciences process-oriented curriculum focuses on recurring concerns of individuals and families, concerns that involve *different ways of knowing and acting*—

- What implications does multidisciplinary study have for the traditional ways school departments have been organized?

- How should licensure systems accommodate special faculty interests and talents?

- When do teachers have time to plan together and students have opportunities to work with teachers knowledgeable about their special project areas?

If family and consumer sciences process-oriented curriculum is to be an important part of school improvement efforts—

- What models are available for providing consistent in-depth professional development opportunities to further understanding and practice in family and consumer sciences process oriented teaching?

- What opportunities should be available for teachers to study and reflect upon their work in process oriented teaching?

- What are ways to build collegiality between family and consumer sciences teachers and other educators in striving for collaborative pursuit of learning expectations of students, process teaching and overall school improvement efforts?

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Principles of Teaching Practice in Family and Consumer Sciences Education

Janet F. Laster

Principle 1: Mission Driven Curriculum

The vision and mission of family and consumer sciences are used as a guide for making curriculum decisions.

Discussion: Family and consumer sciences is the only curriculum area dedicated to promoting individual and family well-being, developing concepts and skills family members need to be proactive and prosocial in the work of the family, and in creating a society that supports the family. As FCS teachers plan and create their curriculum with students, the FCS vision and mission provides direction and focus for all teaching activities.

FCS education fosters thinking that generates ethical action in families and communities. This is a critically important aim for several reasons. Each student is a family and community member. More often than not, students are also employees, and are already experiencing some of the same ethical problems they will face as an adult. Just as adults sometimes feel overwhelmed with everyday problems, adolescents sometimes feel overwhelmed and inadequate to their challenges. Within a milieu of demanding workplaces and what is often a toxic social environment, adolescents benefit from learning experiences and supportive adults who help prepare them for the complexities of family life.

Family life is a training ground for our democratic public life, and determines human development. FSCE prepares family members to examine social realities and cultural norms, preparing them to take the initiative in making changes in the interest of family members and the common good.

To this end, family and consumer sciences education is concerned with the persistent and recurring human problems of the family within the context of its community. It is also concerned with the economic, physical, and socio-psychological well-being of individuals and families. Such practical problems are complex, requiring complex solutions that have interrelated and rippling effects on others, both within and outside the family. Recognizing problems when they exist and collaboratively addressing them, rather than ignoring them, is one characteristic of strong families—and strong communities. Yet recognizing and constructively confronting private and public issues is never easy, requiring caring and skillful creative action.

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As our culture becomes more diverse and interdependent, the concepts and skills needed to address family and community concerns in a democratic society have become more complex, interdependent, and important. Adequately addressing recurring practical problems requires reasoned action in three interrelated and interdependent action areas:

- reflective-emancipatory
- communicative-interpretative
- technical-instrumental

Reflective-emancipatory action frees individuals and families from unconsciously held views that interfere with self-development and the formation of an evolving democratic society. It examines misunderstandings, misconceptions, contradictions, hidden meanings, real needs, external cultural or family norms, and control or domination of individuals or groups.

In taking reflective-emancipatory action, *communicative-interpretative action* helps students understand and interpret the needs, intentions, and values of those involved. To meet needs and valued ends, students find they must interpret private and public policies held in families, workplaces, and community groups. Ideally, communicative action is ongoing and reciprocal among family and community members. Such communicative action involves collaborative practical reasoning and reflective ethical dialogue, critical and creative problem solving, democratic leadership, and team work.

Finally, *technical/instrumental action* carries out decisions to achieve valued ends. Knowing what is best to do and actually doing it well are two very different things. Valued ends such as strong families, meeting the changing needs of family members, and creating and implementing private and public policies do not just happen. Taking actions such as these requires technical skills. Reasoned technical action requires procedures and skilled know-how to *achieve* reasoned judgments.

Summary: Taking reasoned action in families, the workplace, and larger community that influences families is not easy. Maintaining and enhancing family and community life are among the most complex and important things we have to learn. To appropriately meet these complexities, students need reflective, communicative, technical, and democratic skills. These action-oriented, lifelong learning tasks are central to family and consumer sciences education.

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Principle 2. Partnership with Families

Family and consumer sciences education supports and complements the work and responsibilities of the family as a social institution.

Discussion: The family and consumer science education teacher has a partnership with students' parents and their families. Family, school, and community partnerships support students in addressing the practical problems they currently face and prepare them for similar yet more complex problems they will face in the future. This objective is best met in supportive, safe learning environments.

Supportive, safe learning environments can be difficult, and tricky, to achieve. As adolescents develop their own identify and independence, having a safe place to discuss confidential issues with peers and adults is important for them. Parents need to understand their adolescents' perspectives, and need to be reassured they are still needed and in control. Students need to understand and respect their parents' perspectives. Openness, respect, and collaboration with everyone in the triad help to create the supportive environment needed by all involved.

It is constructive to establish partnerships through telephone calls, notes, letters, newsletters, department open houses, and parent-teacher-student conferences. As parents share their values and learning goals for their children, they become actively involved in the learning process. This often correlates with improved student achievement. When teachers and adolescents invite parents to participate in FCS class activities, parents values and opinions contribute to dynamic class discussions.

Student learning and action projects in the home and community require parent-student planning, parent approval, collaboration (as appropriate), and parent/student evaluation. FCS courses may be evaluated by parents as well as students. The evaluation may seek suggestions for ways to improve the course, or to procure resources. Giving parents an evaluation form at the beginning of a course with an invitation to evaluate throughout the course and return the sheet at the end is one way to foster this ongoing partnership.

Summary: Although establishing and maintaining family partnerships requires time, teacher-family partnerships also provide memorable learning experiences. Collaborating with family members to plan and support adolescents in the learning process provides a living example of what is required for the continuous building processes necessary in family and community life.

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Principle 3: Practical Problem-Based Curriculum

Each family and consumer sciences program and course is developed around authentic recurring practical problems of families and communities, and includes concepts for addressing these concerns and taking ethical action.

Discussion: The most difficult problems facing adolescents and adults are not technical problems, but the human problems of family, work, community, and their interrelationships. Other curriculum areas may be concerned with theoretical and technical questions, or with gaining declarative knowledge, whereas family and consumer sciences is concerned with action-oriented questions: practical, what-to-do issues affecting people. These questions usually involve a degree of uncertainty, because they include ethical judgements about what to do for the good of self and others—now and in the future. Responding to these issues requires practical reasoning as well as declarative, procedural, and value knowledge from a variety of disciplines.

Since the aim of the FCS curriculum is to help students become increasingly critical and creative in making ethically responsible decisions, and for taking action relative to their families, workplaces, and communities, FCS teachers focus on current continuing concerns of their particular students, and on their taking responsible ethical action now. The processes for addressing current concerns are processes that remain relevant throughout life. Continuing concerns include "What should be done (in this uncertain situation)?" "What should we eat?" "What should I do about coordinating my work and personal life?" "What ought I do about family communication?" or "What ought we do to nurture human development—in ourselves, and in varying contexts with infants, toddlers, teenagers, adults?" "What career should I choose?"

Areas of family-focused problems (see page 49 for examples in Table 1) include

- reasoning for family and community action issues;
- family and community development;
- family, career, and community connections;
- interpersonal relationships in the family, workplace, and community;
- human development;
- nutrition and wellness;
- family and consumer resource management, including housing and living environments, food preparation and food science, and textiles and clothing.

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Table 1.
Example of Family and Consumer Sciences Concepts for Addressing Practical Family Problems

Practical Problems (Concerns about what action to take under uncertain conditions)	**Context Concepts** (Reality: Conditions creating or affecting the problem/concern)	**Valued Ends Concepts** (Ideal desired results)	**Action Concepts** (Means for achieving the valued ends)	**Consequence Concepts** (Results of proposed actions)	**Process Concepts** (Used when addressing practical problems and preparing to take action)
Reasoning for action • Uncertainty about what action to take in changing conditions • Uncertainty in relationships • Impulsive actions • Incivility • Voluminous, conflicting information • Unjust judgments • Inadequate reasoning • Unethical behavior • Standards to judge actions	Human conditions • Brain functioning • Reasoning capabilities • Self-control • Values/goals • Character Environmental conditions • Cultural norms • Changing cultural norms • Food, drugs • Violence	• Rational action • Ethical action • Prosocial action • Moral action • Well developed reasoning • Reliable information and sources • Safe, low risk action • Practical wisdom • Reasoned action • Human betterment: Increase in "ultimate good"—that which is good in itself	Alternative reasoning processes • Scientific reasoning • Practical reasoning • Evaluating/judging • Planning Alternative actions • Technical actions • Communicative actions • Reflective-emancipatory action	Consequences of alternatives • Probable short-term, long-term effects on self, others, society • Possible effects of inadequate/adequate reasoning • Effects of food, drugs on reasoning • Effects of disease on reasoning • Effects of inadequate reasoning • Effects of ethical/unethical actions: self, others, society	**Intellectual Processes** *Lifelong Learning Processes:* • Locating and evaluating information sources • Developing concepts and skills Practical inquiry and reasoning: • Determining goals/valued ends to resolve a concern/practical problem • Establishing criteria and standards for judging actions • Evaluating contextual conditions of concern • Analyzing discrepancies between contextual factors (reality) and valued-ends (ideal) • Creating and judging alternative actions • Identifying possible and probable consequences • Judging sources of information, opinions, reasons, evidence • Making judgments based on valued ends, context, alternative actions and their consequences • Identifying underlying assumptions of positions • Uncovering ideologies which distort understandings in relationships, • Resolving value differences using ethical principles, e.g., respect and caring concern for others, justice, reciprocity, and common good
Family and Community • Family development • Family responsibilities • Family and jobs • Family-community responsibilities • Family and technology • Community building • Power • Leadership	Human conditions (See above) Environmental conditions • Cultural norms - Of families - Of community • Laws and policies affecting families • Historical factors • Political conditions • Changing contexts and patterns	• Well-being of individuals and families • Strong families • Interdependence • Common good • Commitment-Freedom balance • Protection • Reciprocity • Inclusion • Democratic ideals	Alternative means for: • Developing strong families • Caring for family members • Protecting family • Communicating with family • Encouraging family members • Educating family members • Advocating for family members • Changing harmful norms • Creating family laws, policies	Consequences of alternatives • Effects of strong families • Effects of varying cultural norms on families • Effects of media on family • Effects of technology on family • Effects of autonomy with/without commitment on family • Effects of types of power • Effects of leadership styles	

Table 1.
(continued)

Practical Problems (Concerns about what action to take under uncertain conditions)	**Context Concepts** (Reality: Conditions creating or affecting the problem/concern)	**Valued Ends Concepts** (Ideal desired results)	**Action Concepts** (Means for achieving the valued ends)	**Consequence Concepts** (Results of proposed actions)	**Process Concepts** (Used when addressing practical problems and preparing to take action)
Human Development • Physical development • Social-emotional development • Intellectual development • Moral development • Spiritual development • Career development	Human conditions • Developmental levels • Developmental assets • Developmental needs • Goals / values • Psychological states • Personality • Assumptions Environmental conditions • Family resources • Community resources	• Healthy development • Sensitivity to needs • Responsive to needs • Safe and secure • Developmentally appropriate • Nurturing • Character • Credible reputation	Alternative means for • Nurturing human development • Educating children • Protecting children • Self-development • Lifelong learning • Character development • Being credible • Clarifying values of others • Socializing family members	Consequences of alternatives • Effects of nurturance • Effects of neglect • Effects of dominance • Effects of abuse • Effects of education • Effects of diet on fetus • Effects of drugs on fetus • Effects of technology on development • Effects of advocacy	• Providing reasons based on value principles, scientific principles, observational evidence and/or experiences *Creative Problem Solving:* • Setting parameters • Brainstorming • Synectics *Scientific Inquiry and Reasoning:* • Defining terms • Judging validity and reliability of information sources, opinions, evidence • Providing reasons based on scientific principles, observation, experience • Hypothesizing and testing hypotheses/theories • Observing and accurately recording data • Drawing conclusions based on factual observations • Giving reasons based on facts and scientific principles *Mathematical Problem Solving:* Managing Resources • Setting goals • Forming plan of action • Organizing and allotting resources • Delegating responsibilities • Evaluating and monitoring actions
Interpersonal Relationships: • Peer relationships • Parent-child • Employee-employee relationships • Employee-employer relationships • Family relationships • Community relationships • Power and control	Human conditions (see above for examples) • Ideology • Hegemony Environmental conditions (see above for examples) • Cultural norms of workplaces • Perspectives of others, e.g., power and privilege • Liberating social conditions • Oppressive social conditions	• Respect for persons • Connected relationships • Altruism • Sensitive, responsive, reciprocal, and supportive relationship • Fairness and equity • Reciprocity • Cooperative • Collaborative	Alternative means for • Respecting others • Establishing relationships • Maintaining relationships • Terminating relationships • Changing conditions interfering with optimum development • Resolving conflicts • Disciplining • Solving problems	Consequences of alternatives, e.g. • Effects of respect and disrespect - On self and others - On society • Effects of establishing different types of relationships • Effects of maintaining different types of relationships • Effects of terminating different types of relationships under varying conditions	

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Table 1.
(continued)

Practical Problems (Concerns about what action to take under uncertain conditions)	**Context Concepts** (Reality: Conditions creating or affecting the problem/concern)	**Valued Ends Concepts** (Ideal desired results)	**Action Concepts** (Means for achieving the valued ends)	**Consequence Concepts** (Results of proposed actions)	**Process Concepts** (Used when addressing practical problems and preparing to take action)
Nutrition and Wellness • Adequate nutrition • Individual wellness • Weight control • Meanings of food and food practices • Family health • Sports nutrition • Prenatal nutrition • Food attitudes and norms • Food consumption patterns	Human conditions • Nutritional needs • Body composition • Metabolism • Exercise • Food meanings Environmental conditions • Cultural traditions • Food norms • Food availability • Available resources: Time, money, energy, equipment, supplies • Responsibilities	• Healthy nutrition • Clean and sanitary • Balanced diet • Developmentally appropriate diets • Safe food supply • Adequate food and water supply	Alternative • Diets • Foods for nutrients • Foods of cultures • Food preparation methods for health • Food preparation methods of cultures • Weight control methods	• Effects of diets - on development - on disease - on family members - on society - on global resources • Weight control methods • Effects of eating disorders - on development - on family • Effects of eating practices - on development - on family - on economy • Effects of food related laws	**Social Processes** *Interpersonal Reasoning:* • Empathizing and perspective taking • Attending to and responding to each others' needs • Dialoguing to communicate, share decision making, arrive at consensus or compromise, and support each other in everyday problem solving. *Democratic Processes:* • Reasoned dissent • Reflective dialogue • Consensus-building • Coalition-building • Collaborative decision making • Negotiation • Constructive evaluation of options • Private and public policy making • Democratic leadership • Parliamentary procedures • Team work.
Family and Consumer Resources • Financial resources • Human resources • Time • Technology • Housing and home furnishings • Clothing • Food preparation, service	Human conditions • Human Resources: Knowledge, skills, time, energy • Economic resources Environmental conditions • Community resources • Technology • Media	• Self-sufficiency • Interdependence • Rights and responsibilities of consumer • Rights and responsibilities of seller • Economical • Feasible • Efficient • Effective • Convenient	Alternative goods and services Alternative means for • Managing personal and family resources • Obtaining goods and services • Purchasing goods and services • Obtaining shelter • Caring for home • Caring for clothing • Repairing and maintaining personal and family goods • Creating consumer laws and policies	• Effects of maintenance on family well-being • Effects consumer laws • Effects of economy on families • Effects of economic laws, policies on families • Effects of credit abuse • Effects of long-term financial planning • Effects of unethical practices on consumer costs • Effects of self-management on development	

As students investigate practical problems in these areas, they develop practical reasoning, interpersonal communication, leadership, and management skills. Also, family-focused courses introduce knowledge, foundational processes, and value concepts needed for human services oriented courses—particularly for careers in food production and services; food science, dietetics, and nutrition; hospitality, tourism, and recreation; facilities management and maintenance; interior design and furnishing; apparel and textile design; manufacturing and merchandising; early childhood and educational services; and consumer services.

Family-focused courses also provide foundational knowledge, processes, value concepts required in other human services related careers such as child and family services; education; health; law and legal studies; law enforcement; fire service; public administration and politics; and social services.

FCS teachers and students organize their teaching/learning around the collaborative identification and analysis of "what to do" problems. In addressing these issues, they develop plans for taking reasoned action. Because family concerns are interdisciplinary, students seek knowledge from a range of disciplines—art, social psychology, economics, politics, cultural anthropology, philosophy, history, sociology, linguistics, biology, physics, and chemistry. They learn that their concerns take other forms in other contexts, such as in different stages of human development, or in different career settings.

The broad concepts for addressing practical problems in uncertain situations in families, careers, and communities include:

■ **Process concepts**—the intellectual and social processes involved in individual and group reasoning and taking action on everyday problems.

- **Intellectual processes**—scientific inquiry and reasoning for gaining new knowledge and testing theories; and practical reasoning for achieving valued ends.
- **Social processes—**interpersonal reasoning; democratic processes, constructive evaluation, private and public policy making, team work; leadership processes, goal setting, leading meetings using parliamentary procedures, building coalitions, and resolving conflicts.

In addition to process concepts, FCS classes develop understanding of four broad concepts required in reasoning about what to believe and do:

■ **Personal and environmental context concepts** guide students to consider the context of developmental stages and needs: individual, family, and community resources; mores, rules and laws; cultural norms and expectations when making decisions about recurring practical problems.

■ **Valued ends concepts** suggest the most ideal results for quality of life, and provide criteria for evaluating alternative actions, making decisions, and taking action. Examples of valued-ends include the well-being of individuals and families: economic, physical, and social-psychological well-being; caring, respectful, and responsible relationships; democratic ideals; healthy nutrition; clean and sanitary conditions; safe environment; fairness and equity; and credible reputation and character.

■ **Action concepts** describe possible means for achieving the valued ends. People making decisions usually need three strategies for action:

- **Technical action** gets things done in the home, family, and community where private or public care giving is necessary for quality of life. For example, planning, preparing and serving food, selecting and caring for living environments and clothes; and maintaining safe, clean, and sanitary conditions.

- **Communicative/interpretive action** calls for interpreting communications from diverse individuals in our complex world, and relating to others in caring, supportive ways. For example, clarifying values, educating, advocating, dialoguing, and collaboratively solving problems.

- **Reflective/emancipatory action** changes situations that interfere with healthy development, productivity, and autonomy with responsibility. For example, critiquing present social conditions, and forming individual and social goals and means for accomplishing change; collaboratively creating rules and laws, policies, and practices; and changing personal or family practices to meet needs of family members or to promote the common good of others in society.

■ **Consequences concepts** describe the results of holding a particular valued-end, or of actions proposed and taken. Students examine both primary and secondary consequences—how the students themselves are affected and how others will be affected now and in the future:

- **Consequences of technical actions for self and others,** such as effects of a low protein diet on brain development of fetus during third trimester of pregnancy, and ultimately on the parents and society; effects of television on development of children, and ultimately on cultural norms;

- **Consequences of communicative actions for self and others**, such as probable effects of quitting a job without giving employer notice; effects of clarifying values; effects of education; effects of collaboratively addressing problems versus individually addressing problems.

- **Consequences of reflective emancipatory actions on self and others**, such as probable effects of raising consciousness of cultural norms regarding domestic abuse; effects of laws on reducing child abuse; effects of uncovering the root causes of alcoholism, codependency, and confronting alcoholism among peers and families; effects of dominating and supportive relationships on the quality of life and development of young children; and effects of well-developed reasoning versus inadequate reasoning on relationships and quality of life.

Planning for FCS courses begins with *broad practical problems* such as "What ought to be done about food for the family in society?" (Staaland

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and Strom 1996). Sub-problems and questions are then identified, along with process concepts and other broad concepts to be developed.

Sub-problems might be "Why should people be concerned about food, its meaning, and ways of obtaining it?" "What should families and society do about food consumption patterns?" "What ought to be done about getting food?" and "What action should individuals, families, and society take regarding food-related concerns?"

More specific problems, reflected in communicative-emancipatory questions that evolve, might be "Should people promote a plentiful food source despite the environmental consequences?" "Should food be used to control others?" "What should the family do about food-related information?" "What should the family do about changing food norms?"

Process concepts include practical reasoning and social skills, such as perspective taking and discrepancy analysis, concept analysis, and reflective dialogue.

Other broad concepts might emphasize food attitudes, food norms, reasoned action, interdependence, safe food supply, reliable information, and discrepancies.

Summary: FCS problem-based curriculum addresses issues that concern people in families, careers, and communities. Students use declarative, procedural, and value concepts as they address recurring practical problems, and take technical, communicative, and reflective ethical action.

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Principle 4: Authentic Instruction and Performance Assessment

Effective learning environments for family and consumer science courses make use of authentic experiential learning experiences, resources, and assessment. A variety of authentic assessment tasks and instruments are integral to the instructional process.

Discussion: Aristotle reminds us that for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. FCS learning environments give students opportunities to learn concepts and processes essential for living. Authentic learning focuses on real, everyday recurring practical problems, and on taking action to resolve problems. Practical wisdom is gained through reflecting on and evaluating experiences, social conditions, and social issues encountered in everyday life.

Classroom experiences are based on real problems, and involve students in hands-on experiences similar to those encountered in the real world. Learning experiences should be faithful to the realities that learners will likely encounter. To gather information for taking reasoned action, students become skilled in using newspapers, periodicals, reference works, textbooks, encyclopedias, telephone books, computers, and the Internet. Helping students locate and use home and community resources now and in the future is critical for lifelong learning and problem solving.

Authentic instruction and assessment tasks require students to share their work with an audience beyond teachers or classrooms. Students might address parents, peers, children, city council members, school board members, community members, or legislators. Such authentic tasks require students to produce meaning or knowledge through activities such as written or oral presentations, letter writing, creating a Web page, negotiating differences, creating or repairing things, or doing something for other people in the home, family, or workplace—especially public caregiving workplaces. This construction of knowledge is based on inquiry that draws on a content base and seeks an in-depth understanding rather than only a superficial awareness of content.

Since criteria and standards are not always identified in real world problems, FCS classrooms teach students to establish criteria and standards for action. Consequently, rubrics for guiding action and assessing quality of process and concept learnings are best created by students and teacher rather than just the teacher alone. Such performance rubrics may take the form of checklists, scorecards, or rating scales. Multidimensional performance rating scales that assess concepts, products, and processes promote self-reflection, self-evaluation, and ultimately, self-development.

Summary: Centering on real-life problems, and using family and community resources to gain knowledge for taking action is the essence of authentic learning environments. Establishing standards for excellence, and evaluating actions throughout the problem-solving process—just as students

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will in their lives beyond school—is the essence of authentic assessment. As teachers incorporate students' realities throughout the teaching-learning-evaluation process, they help students transfer classroom learnings to the real world, and give them learning tools for managing practical problem solving throughout their lives.

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Principle 5: Learner-Centered Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

FCS programs and courses are learner-centered and developmentally appropriate; students participate actively in planning, implementing, and evaluating the program and learning experiences. The curriculum emerges through collaborative program planning in community-based advisory committees and from the co-investigation and interaction of students, teachers, and learning resources.

Discussion: Each family and consumer sciences teacher assumes visionary leadership in a collaborative curriculum development process. This requires the teacher to organize, motivate, and monitor the advisory committee process as well as teacher-student cooperative planning in the classroom. Although national and state content standards guide program development, it is at the local level that practical, value-laden curriculum decisions are made. Ideally, this is accomplished through *initial planning* by a community-based family and consumer sciences advisory committee composed of parents, community representatives, school personnel, and past and present students. Appropriate representation and active involvement of all those directly and indirectly affected by curriculum

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decision making help ensure community ownership, shared power, and consideration of varying perspectives.

Representatives for advisory committees should be key people in the school and community—people who are are open-minded, have critical analysis ability, possess interpersonal reasoning and listening skills, creativity, a willingness to consider new ideas, can compromise, and who are interested serving all students. When committee members become engaged in practical reasoning and reflective dialogue, a morally defensible family-focused curriculum is more likely to be developed. The committee's reflective dialogue may address authentic experiences and questions such as

- What recurring practical problems do individuals and families in our community face?
- What recurring practical problems might you/our students face in 5–10 years? 15–20 years?
- Which recurring concerns should our family and consumer science program address?
- What content should be taught for preparing our youth to address these kinds of questions now and in the next 50 years?
- Whose needs and interests should be met?
- What goals and value-ends should be met?
- What is the historical context of current practical problems?
- What resources do we need to address these issues in the learning environment?
- How should we assess learning?

Practical reasoning about questions such as these involves deciding what to believe and do based on valued-ends, contextual realities, and the consequences of actions—particularly the ethical consequences of proposed actions on the well-being of all those involved and affected. This requires those making decisions to develop a critical awareness of the realities of everyday life in families, classrooms, and society, as well as of "their own goals and values for the program in relation to democratic principles of freedom, justice, human dignity, and social responsibility" (Fauske 1994, p. 203).

Reflective dialogue involves reappraising experiences in search of new possibilities. Discussants (learners and advisory board members) may need to rethink the meanings of present situations so that new understandings and actions can be formed (Brookfield 1987).

Finally, using the problem-based curriculum framework developed by the community and school advisory committee and approved by the school board, the teacher along with the students create curriculum through *classroom planning*. As the teacher and students pursue continuing and evolving practical problems, they create curriculum. This requires practical

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reasoning and reflective dialogue by the teacher and students together to set learning priorities. In a middle school or high school personal development course, the teacher might ask, "What are the issues and problems of seventh graders in this school? Which of these questions are like those your parents asked when they were your age? Which will likely be questions your children will need to address?" In a parenting course, cooperative planning might begin with the teacher asking, "What practical problems did your parents face? What questions will you probably need to answer before you become a parent? When you become a parent? What will you need to know and be able to do to best address these concerns? What are the recurring practical problems faced by all members of society, regardless of whether or not we are parents?" This discussion could lead to students interviewing their parents, grandparents, or neighbors, and/or the teacher sharing the scenarios of real-life challenges provided by the advisory committee. With support and encouragement, students take leadership and responsibility for their own learning through a variety of sources.

After group planning, the teacher and students plan individual learning experiences that meet learning needs and address practical problems. These individual action projects may take the form of an FHA/HERO project, such as *Power of One*, or a personalized learning experience in the home, family, or community.

Summary: Like life, program planning in family and consumer sciences is a dynamic, ongoing process. Program planning is a shared experience with community and school faculty members, and particularly with students. Although the emphasis is on recurring practical problems of families, the changing contexts students and families experience create new challenges. Addressing past issues may not necessarily address the recurring concerns of today or tomorrow. Issues must be examined anew, beginning with contextual factors and including valued-ends along with their potential consequences. As this is done, curriculum is created by students and their teacher.

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Principle 6: Caring and challenging democratic learning environment

As an intellectual and moral leader, the family and consumer sciences teacher creates a caring, yet challenging democratic learning environment in which learners become caring, reflective, critical, and imaginative thinkers and active citizens concerned with family policy and family well-being. Students' share responsibility for creating a caring, challenging, democratic environment and their own learning.

Discussion: The teacher assumes a variety of teaching roles as the needs of the learners change. First and foremost, the FCS teacher is the facilitator of learning, reflection, and reasoning for ethical action. The teacher is also a co-investigator, co-learner, and model of intellectual and prosocial democratic actions. The teacher authentically models eager learning rather than emphasizing the role of expert, authority, or helper. Learning is the business and basic role of a FCS teacher.

FCS teachers transform students into lifelong learners as they challenge students with "what should be done" questions, and address the unstructured social problems experienced within and outside the school walls. By modeling caring and prosocial action, FCS teachers guide learners in taking responsible actions that benefit, not harm, others. As students address and take action on problems, they have the benefit of dialoguing with teachers who confirm their work by attributing the best possible motives to their behavior.

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In creating a positive learning environment, an effective FCS teacher:

■ *Creates a safe, caring learning environment* where all students are respected, supported, encouraged to take learning risks, and protected from domination and intimidation. The teacher shares power with learners and exposes power-relationships, helping students minimize inequality in varying contexts. Collaboratively, the teacher and students create and enforce classroom rules, supporting the development of leadership. This environment sets the stage for students to use democratic processes in talking together about moral issues and questions that affect the common good of individuals, families, and society. Through advocating for the rights of others, students learn a proactive stance in caring. Effective teachers coach students to observe and listen for cues, both verbal and nonverbal, that reflect the needs of people from all developmental levels, abilities, and cultures—beginning with their classmates and family members.

As a responsible leader, the teacher convenes class with an agenda, but adjusts the agenda to meet diverse student needs, helping students create informed actions within time limitations and the constraints of resources. The teacher engages in dialogue with students—listening attentively, sharing personal feelings and thoughts, and responding authentically. The teacher gives reasons for actions and uses practical reasoning when disciplining students.

■ *Raises students critical awareness of authentic practical problems and reasoning* through newspaper articles, video, case study, scenarios, or stories, including those occurring in the FCS classroom. Students are also encouraged to recognize, raise critical awareness of their peers, and address their own practical problems. Together, students and the teacher examine social realities and cultural norms that are supportive or oppressive and harmful.

■ *Helps students use the reasoning processes and related questions* in addressing recurring human problems. This is facilitated while learning *from* and *with* other people, *using* and *reflecting* on a variety of experiences, sources of information, and materials, and most of all by *critiquing* those experiences and materials to identify unjust and uncaring actions—and then to create and take ethically justifiable actions. To continuously improve one's family and community requires each person to be critically aware of discrepancies and conflicts, and to make informed judgments based on facts and values.

■ *Uses a combination of teaching models* for conceptual and social change, accommodating individual differences and learning needs. Many strategies are useful, but some are particularly appropriate when studying family and community living: strategies that incorporate open-ended questioning, contrasting increasingly complex examples of concepts, and reflection on one's own practices with valued ends. Examples of teaching strategies that meet these criteria include Thomas' (1996) reflective dialogue instructional design, Bruner's concept attainment model, role playing, jurisprudential inquiry, synectics, and cooperative learning

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strategies such as group investigation (Joyce and Weil 1996; Love et al. 1994) and structured controversy (Johnson and Johnson 1991).

Teaching models that help students experience a democratic caring environment provide a reasoned basis for social change. Value analysis (Metcalf 1971), the consideration model (McPhail, Ungoed-Thomas and Chapman 1975), the social action model (Newmann 1975), the FHA/HERO community service approach, and Lickona's (1991) comprehensive approach to character education, all facilitate students' wisdom regarding practical problems in society, and give them opportunities for prosocial action.

■ *Leads students in systematically and collaboratively identifying and addressing authentic personal, family, and community* problems. Together, students and their teacher become co-investigators, while the teacher models reflective dialogue and constructive ways of learning. Students learn to ask conceptual and critical questions, organizing their learning in ways that reveal patterns. Through dialogue, critique, and collaboration with others, students find their way to taking enlightened action for the best interests of all concerned. Together, students and teachers evaluate their strategies, consider valued-ends, contextual factors, and consequences for self and others.

Summary: The teacher assumes leadership for class routines and small group structures. To facilitate learning, the teacher asks open-ended questions, creates open-ended learning experiences, teaches reasoning and interpersonal skills for addressing recurring practical problems, and helps students locate information and resources. Throughout this process, the teacher helps students see possibilities and consequences for others, and asks questions that raise awareness of just and unjust actions, caring and uncaring actions, respectful and unrespectful relationships, and adequate and inadequate reasoning. Throughout the instructional process, teachers provide opportunities for student leadership. Students learn to collaborate with others in making a positive difference in their families and communities now and in the future.

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Principle 7: Reasoning for Action: Process-Oriented Teaching

The central thinking process developed in FCS education is known as practical reasoning. This kind of reasoning has ethical action as its aim, and includes other intellectual and social processes that promote family and community life. It is developed through real-world problem solving and hands-on experiences.

Discussion: Process-oriented teaching promotes the development of core processes that learners apply in their roles as family members, employees, and citizens. These processes are the content of FCS. Reasoned judgments about what to believe and do are based on four practical reasoning concepts:

- valued-ends,
- contextual factors,
- means to valued-ends, and
- consequences of actions.

Concepts of process are taught *directly* through inductive and deductive concept development experiences, and *indirectly* through teacher example and student reflective use of particular processes.

- Teachers introduce key process concepts at the beginning of a course or when appropriate. Students use processes repeatedly during the course to develop deeper understanding and skill.

- Teachers ask questions that stimulate the reasoning processes, and expect students in turn to ask themselves and others reasoning questions.

- Teachers and students reflect on their thinking processes, and demonstrate their thinking by describing processes they use in developing their reasoning abilities.

- Students are expected to give well-developed, ethically defensible reasons for their positions and actions.

- Teachers and students take action in their school, families, and community to improve conditions for optimum development and democratic living.

- Periodically, students evaluate their thinking and acting by comparing their reasoning with criteria for adequate reasoning. This experience helps students become more responsible in developing their intellectual and interpersonal reasoning skills.

Teachers help students develop their innate reasoning capacities through taking action related to the complexities of contemporary life. In each course, students begin by identifying the recurring practical problems they wish to address. As they address concerns and learn concepts for

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resolving them, students grapple with the same issues they will encounter in different contexts in the future.

By organizing students in small groups of two or more, teachers simulate family groups within the classroom. Students work and reason together in small groups, gathering in large groups to address issues pertaining to all and to take collective action. ***Interpersonal reasoning and practical reasoning*** are used extensively throughout the course. Students assume leadership for addressing particular problems through team work—just as they will need to do in their own families, workplaces, and communities throughout their lives.

Democratic ideals support the philosophy of this process: equality of rights and opportunities, unity in diversity, balance of individual freedom with protection of the common good, and religious freedom. Students use scientific inquiry and reasoning, conceptualization, and self-evaluation to gain information and develop concepts for resolving concerns. They use personal and group management processes to accomplish their goals in individual and group activities.

FCS educators expect learning experiences and action projects to extend beyond the classroom. Action projects include peer and community education projects, care giving through home and/or community service projects, personal development or skill development projects, and public policy development/change projects. These might include organizing information fairs, writing brochures, or developing web sites. Other hands-on activities might include

- telephoning community agencies or searching the Internet for information,
- interviewing family/ community members or videotaping a zoning board or school board meeting,
- experimenting with food preparation in the food laboratory or preparing foods for a homeless shelter,
- critiquing child custody laws or petitioning state legislators to change the child custody laws; and
- proposing alternative methods for resolving conflicts in the classroom or mediating conflicts between children while babysitting or with peers at school.

Meaningful action projects beyond the classroom require the teacher to guide and support students. By using a planning process, students think through the details and involve all group members in a project. Through suggesting resources and asking practical reasoning questions, teachers help students uncover contextual conditions, define ethical issues, identify valued ends, and set goals. They can guide students in evaluating pros and cons of options and feasibility within the realities of the situation.

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Summary: In process-oriented teaching, teachers and learners use a variety of action-oriented learning experiences to develop intellectual and interpersonal relationship skills. Teachers encourage students to use these processes in all their experiences at school, at home, and in the community. The learning environment and learning process extends beyond the school day and school walls into the real world.

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Principle 8: Open-Ended Critical Questions

Family and consumer sciences classrooms use open-ended critical questions both as content for students to learn, and as a primary teaching strategy.

Discussion: In FCS, students are immersed in a culture of questioning. At the beginning of FCS courses, teachers tell students plainly that they will develop their ability to ask questions that will help them decide what to do. The teacher also points out that the process of asking critical questions will help them continue learning throughout their lives—in making good judgments for themselves, and with their families, co-workers, and community members.

Questioning provides orientation and guidance for investigating practical problems and reasons for ethical action. As content to be learned, critical, conceptual, and technical questions provide an everyday strategy in decision-making situations. Throughout FCS courses, teachers encourage students to enter into discussions that shape their classroom community, and to initiate and participate in discussions that will shape their families, workplaces, and communities. It is hoped that students will continue to use questioning skills in their families and communities throughout their lives.

Teachers and students use open-ended critical questions to structure the learning process. Questions facilitate exploring valued-ends, context, alternative choices, consequences of actions—especially their effects on self and others. Good questions stimulate critical/emancipatory, conceptual, and technical thinking for reasoned action.

When faced with "what to do" questions, students and their teacher use key reasoning questions to examine concerns. Key questions may be posted in the classroom and used on learning assignments and materials. A handout could provide a developmentally appropriate framework of practical reasoning questions for students to use when trying to decide what best to do. For middle or junior high school students, questions should use simple vocabulary words (e.g., What are my choices?), while more complex vocabulary and expectations may suit high school or gifted students (What alternative actions might I take?).

Some examples of basic ***practical reasoning*** questions:

- Why is this a concern/challenge/problem?
- What information is needed to help us decide what to do?
- What are/should be our *goals and values?*—to help us decide what to do?
- What *contextual factors* should be considered? What is the reality?
- What personal and societal factors contribute to this concern?
- What factors affect my ability to pursue my goals and values?

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- What *actions* can be used to reach my/our goals? What are the dominant actions used? Why? What are some alternative actions that will achieve our goals/values?
- What are the *consequences of these actions* on me and my family now? On future generations?
- Which alternative action/means will produce the best set of consequences? For the good of all affected/involved?
- What is the *best action* to take? What is the most ethical/morally defensible action to take?
- What *reasons* support and refute my/our doing this?

Throughout the learning process, students learn to evaluate the quality of their information and reasoning. They might ask

- Who is making this claim?
- Is this a credible source?
- Is this biased information? How can one tell if information/someone is biased?
- Whose interests are being served?
- What point of view (such as aesthetic, economic, intellectual, ethical, ideological) is reflected?

To help resolve intrapersonal and interpersonal value conflicts, students evaluate actions for their ethical consequences:

- Who will be affected? Will those affected be affected equally? helped? harmed?
- What will be short-term and long-term consequences on the well-being of self and others?
- What is it like to be the person adversely affected by this action? Would I like to be that person? (role-reversal test)
- What would happen if everyone did what I am proposing to do? Would the consequences be helpful or harmful if everyone did this? (universal consequences test)
- What effect will this action have on my relationship with this person?

FCS teachers need a large repertoire of reasoning questions to facilitate students' reasoning process for action. Learners also need a large repertoire of reasoning questions. Using appropriate questions, the teacher models the process that family members and citizens use for creating quality family and community living environments.

To extend students' questioning repertoire, key questions can be added to the reasoning framework for deciding what to do. Sequences of ***critical/emancipatory questions*** reveal situations that limit optimum human

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development and well-being. Here are examples of critical/emancipatory questions:

- What is happening? Who is affected? What are the ethical or moral concerns?
- What should *I* do regarding . . . ? What should *WE* do regarding . . . ?
- What are our obligations and responsibilities regarding . . . ?
- What would be best *for me and my family*? For *well-being of myself and others*? For *society*?
- Why? What reasons support my/your/our conclusion? decision?
- What must be true for you to believe that?
- What is true and what is false about that view?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your position/conclusion?
- Who is affected by . . . ? Who will be harmed? Most adversely affected? Why?
- How does the person harmed feel? affected adversely feel? How would I feel if I were that person? Would you want to be the person harmed/affected adversely?
- Whose interests are being served regarding . . . ?
- Whose voices are being heard? Not heard? Is this fair and just? Is it ethically and morally defensible? Are the rights of all involved and affected considered equally?
- Will this action be helpful? Harmful? Result in positive or negative short-term consequences? Result in positive or negative long-term consequences?
- What if everyone took this action? What harmful/helpful patterns might develop?
- What might happen if these actions/goals continue? What patterns might develop in this family? other families? society?
- Why should we be concerned about . . . ?
- What beliefs/actions/conditions contribute to this recurring concern?
- What are the assumptions? Descriptive assumptions? Value assumptions and conflicts?
- What are the fallacies/errors in the reasoning?
- How good is the evidence? Are there rival causes?
- Are the statistics deceptive?
- What are the contradictions? Value contradictions? Value conflicts?
- What reasonable conclusions are possible?

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- What conclusions/actions are ethically/morally defensible?
- What actions should be taken to meet democratic ideals? to be equitable?
- What should be changed? What actions or goals would you recommend? advocate?
- What reasons support your conclusions? Do you have factual reasons? value-based reasons?

Conceptual/interpretive questions focus on the meanings, values, and understandings of concepts. Examples of conceptual-interpretive questions and how to frame them include

- What is the meaning of . . . ?
- What do *you* mean by . . . ?
- How is that meaning different from the meaning held by . . . ?
- What is most important to me/you? Why?
- What should be our goal(s)? value-ends?
- What type of criteria and standards are needed? Aesthetic? Healthy and safety? Environmental? Economic? Intellectual? Prudential? Ethical/Moral? Ideological?
- What is your viewpoint/criteria regarding . . . ? What viewpoint/type of criteria do others hold regarding . . . ?
- What personal and social factors are involved?
- What personal factors are involved? Are gender factors involved? Development level affecting/involved? Ability? Resources?
- What social factors are involved? Are economic factors involved? social? race? class? cultural? political? ideological?
- When did this practice first occur in human history? Why? Are these defensible reasons today? Why? Why not?
- What actions might be taken regarding . . . to achieve our goals/value-ends?
- How could resources be used more effectively?
- What should be done the same? differently the next time?

Technical questions focus on factual, cause-effect, and means-ends knowledge. Examples of how to frame technical questions include:

- What is . . . . ?
- What is related to . . . ?
- What causes . . . ?
- What is the consequence/effect of . . . ?

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- What might be done to accomplish . . . ?
- What is related to . . . ?
- What steps need to be taken to. . . . ? How might we accomplish . . . ?
- Who? What? When? Where?
- What was accomplished? learned?

In framing questions from each category, teachers must be sensitive to their students' developmental levels. Questions that adults might ask are not always appropriate for students. With experience, teachers learn to organize questions, and their underlying reasoning processes, to help student thinking become more complex, abstract, and discriminating, as well as more empathetic, other-centered, and proactive. Key reasoning questions to be used with and by early adolescents would be more *concrete* and less *abstract* than those for later adolescents:

- What is happening? What is the concern? Who will be affected?
- What values should I use to decide what is best to do?
- What information do I need to decide what to do?
- Is this information accurate? true? reliable? credible? reasonably complete?
- Is the source of my information reliable? credible?
- What choices do I have? What else might I do that will achieve high standards?
- What are the consequences of these possible choices?
- What will be the consequences on me? my family? others? Helpful? Harmful?
- What choice is best, considering how my actions will affect myself and others?

Key questions for older or developmentally advanced adolescents would include additional ***critical*** and ***conceptual*** questions requiring more ***abstract*** thinking:

- What is the discrepancy, if any, between your/our values and reality?
- What is causing this discrepancy?
- What might be done to reduce this discrepancy?
- What criteria and standards are needed to evaluate alternative actions? Are aesthetic criteria or standards needed? health and safety criteria and standards needed? environmental? economic? intellectual? prudential? ethical/moral? ideological?
- What personal and social factors are involved? gender? developmental? ability? resources? economical? social? race? class? cultural? political? ideological?

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- What are the probable consequences for all people involved in this situation?
- What gaps, ambiguities, or inconsistencies are present in the evidence?
- What is your viewpoint/criteria regarding . . . ? What viewpoint/type of criteria do others hold regarding . . . ?
- Who benefits most from this action? Who is harmed by this action?
- What action can be created that will be helpful, rather than harmful in achieving goals/valued-ends?
- What choice is best considering our valued-ends, the context, alternative choices and their consequences on our family? on society now and in the future?
- What reasons support this conclusion? What is the evidence that this would be best?

Summary: At the beginning of courses and programs, teachers ask the most questions, but by the end of courses and programs, the goal is for students to be asking questions of each other and of themselves as they decide what to believe and do. By demonstrating, coaching, expecting, and evaluating questioning, teachers empower students to critically scrutinize the world around them and then create and recreate ways to achieve ethical/moral goals for self and others.

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Principle 9: Integration of family, academic, and career learnings

Family and consumer sciences curriculum integrates family, academic, and career learnings.

Discussion: FCS curriculum is designed to help students integrate other academic and vocational learnings in a variety of ways:

1. By reinforcing and teaching language arts, mathematics, science, social sciences, art, and career education concepts as students address real-life family and community and problems.

■ Teachers expect students to apply and use learnings from other classes in the family and consumer sciences courses.

■ Academic learnings are explained and used when needed in addressing particular practical problems—by the FCS teacher, learners, and/or the academic teacher.

■ FCS teachers collaborate with other academic teachers to ensure students develop academic proficiencies needed for everyday living and career development.

■ FCS teachers evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of academic concepts and processes.

2. By helping learners understand and develop the foundational interpersonal, reasoning, and management concepts needed in families, careers, and community responsibilities.

■ Beginning with middle and early high school courses, FCS education develops intellectual and social skills.

■ In advanced and specialized family and consumer sciences courses, students develop more complex interpersonal, reasoning, and management concepts.

3. By connecting school-based and work-based learnings.

■ FCS teachers point out and explain ways that learners can use academic learnings in their families, careers, and community obligations.

■ Students are encouraged to ask academic teachers to serve as consultants when pursuing action projects or developing portfolios of their work-based experiences through service learning, shadowing, mentoring, or other career experiences.

4. By linking secondary and post-secondary education experiences.

■ FCS teachers emphasize the lifelong continuum of learning through formal, nonformal, and informal education experiences.

■ FSC teachers present examples of how secondary and post-secondary learning experiences are linked.

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- FCS teachers expect and encourage learners to set lifelong learning goals, and help them plan ways to meet those goals.

- FCS classes help students develop career preparation portfolios.

5. By mentoring students toward their career goals.

- Teachers care about students and show confidence in their being all they can be.

- Teachers coach students to set realistic yet challenging career goals and seek learning experiences that will help them achieve those goals.

- Teachers connect students with other adults outside the school who can also coach and care about learners reaching their career goals.

- Teachers are creative in involving parents in their children's career planning. They help parents be mentors for their children.

Summary: FCS programs help learners link school, family, and work-based learnings. In addressing family issues FCS classwork reinforces academic learning. Teachers, other adults, and parents mentor students' career development; courses help learners develop basic skills and attitudes needed for succeeding in the workplace. FCS programs connect secondary school experiences with post-secondary education and work experiences.

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Principle 10: Reflective Professional Development

Family and consumer sciences teachers continually renew their curriculum and teaching practices through self-reflective professional development experiences and in professional learning communities.

Discussion: FCS teachers have a range of opportunities for renewing and improving their professional practice. Here are some effective approaches that incorporate the practical problem-solving process:

- Observing and reflecting on one's own practice. Self-reflection by journaling about one's own practice may reveal areas for improvement. This may focus on student learning goals and examine social realities.

- Creating a teaching portfolio that demonstrates evidence of practice, such as videos of one's classroom instruction. A portfolio provides a springboard to critiquing one's practices, and may lead to creating new practices in meeting learner needs in a changing milieu.

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- Studying new content and instructional approaches by reading professional literature, viewing videotapes, and discussing effective practice with peers.
- Using student and peer evaluations.
- Building friendships with other professionals. Spending time with other teachers during lunch and planning periods often initiates basic professional development opportunities. Supportive friends often share constructive observations and suggestions.
- Becoming actively involved in professional organizations and regularly attending conferences in which FCS teachers examine changing local, state, and national contexts and developments.
- Implementing action research projects that promote student learning, peer coaching, and professional critical/moral self-reflection. Action research also requires participants to collect data from a variety of sources, including students and parents.

Summary: To continuously renew and improve practice, FCS teachers use a combination of professional development experiences. Effective professional development promotes critical self-reflection, and may include journaling, videotaping, reading, interacting with critical friends in supportive yet challenging professional learning communities. Action research stimulates effective teaching practices.

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What Every Curriculum Administrator Wants to Know About Family and Consumer Sciences Education. Part I

Cheryl Fedje

1. How Do Teachers Manage Classrooms Using A Process-Oriented FCS Approach?

Managing the behavior of students in FCS classrooms begins with helping students develop a sense of community based on democratic ideals. Students can be involved in activities directed toward identifying guidelines for behavior that promote cooperation, responsibility, caring, and a safe, nonthreatening environment. Techniques for managing disruptive behavior should be implemented in the least intrusive manner.

Modeling the expected behavior is a critical task of the FCS teacher. Showing respect for each student, maintaining confidentiality, and being open to different viewpoints are just a few of the behaviors the teacher might model. As the FCS teacher continues to display these behaviors and to work with students in monitoring their own and others' behaviors, learners come to understand their responsibility in maintaining an environment conducive to learning.

Another aspect of managing the FCS classroom relates to the role FCS classes play within a school district. With some exceptions, FCS courses are considered electives. Thus, students must be recruited, often in very competitive situations. FCS teachers also know that students enroll in their courses with varying motivations—ranging from being *interested* in a special course such as parenting, to being *placed* in a course by a guidance counselor or administrator. With this in mind, FCS teachers must establish a student-friendly atmosphere with emphasis on student involvement in "hands on" activities or projects. In many instances, this environment diminishes behavior problems, although noise and activity may increase.

Questions teachers might ask themselves daily: Are students actively involved in the learning process? Are students taking responsibility for their own learning? And, is the classroom structured so that it promotes democratic ideals?

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2. How Do I Organize And Manage A School Day Using A Process-Oriented FCS Approach?

Organizing a process-oriented FCS classroom begins with a long-term plan. This plan provides a framework that allows teachers and students to best manage the human and nonhuman resources available. Within this framework, the *big picture* becomes clearer, and linkages and connections among concepts to be examined in class are apparent. With this framework in mind, the teacher develops a series of short-term plans. In preparing these plans, the teacher considers the teaching/learning strategies to be used, and the available resources in the school, community, and workplace. Teaching strategies are compatible with a critical science perspective and involve students in active learning. Being certain that all materials are available and that students have clear understandings of what they are to do and how they are to do it requires a teacher with well-developed organizational and managerial skills.

All of these factors call for high levels of mental organization and the ability to juggle several tasks at the same time. To survive the mental drain, FCS teachers often rotate "high" energy classes (laboratories, inquiry, and group discussion) with "low" energy classes (engaging students in preparing written assignments, collecting data, or viewing a video).

3. Do FCS teachers teach skills?

FCS addresses two broad types of skills: (1) skills involved in carrying out the work of the family, and (2) employability skills.

Skills involved in carrying out the work of the family

The work of the family is accomplished through three kinds of interdependent and interrelated actions. Each action requires skills that can be taught and practiced in the FCS classroom. The three kinds of actions are reflective/emancipatory, communicative, and technical.

Reflective/emancipatory actions. Reflective action enables individuals and family members to examine unconsciously held views, beliefs, and intentions. Teachers can assist students in developing reflective action in each and every course in a FCS program. For example, learners might examine how their eating practices may have been formed (or are being formed) by the emphasis in our society on thinness, especially for females. Students might question why thinness seems to be valued, explore who might benefit by young people holding this idea, and consider the role that media and corporations play in the development of eating habits.

Communicative actions. Another action that engages family members is communicative action. This refers to the way we develop mutual

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understandings of ideas, intentions, beliefs, and values through social interaction. For instance, crucial aspects of parenting include teaching children about social rules and norms, helping them examine various perspectives on issues, and exploring beliefs held by people around them. This is why parenting and child development courses, as well as all other FCS courses, incorporate skills in communicative actions.

Technical actions. These are the skills that help individuals and family members meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Technical actions involve everyday living tasks. For instance, family members may prepare meals, balance the checkbook, follow directions, or make clothing or decorative items for their home. All of these activities require manipulating inanimate objects, using specified procedures, and/or focusing on an end product.

All three types of actions are essential parts of FCS courses. Frequently, FCS teachers have focused exclusively on technical skills. This, however, does not completely meet the needs of today's FCS students. Technical skills in today's complex society become quickly outdated; teaching technical skills alone is insufficient for developing a contemporary FCS program. But combined with communicative and reflective/emancipatory skills, technical skills are an integral part of the work of the family.

Employability skills

The second broad type of skills are skills of employability. A variety of skills can be practiced in the FCS classroom and then actually applied in on-the-job experiences. FCS teachers may emphasize skills involved with seeking and accepting employment such as completing application forms, writing letters of application, and interviewing. Other skills relating to the technical aspects of food preparation, working with elderly individuals, and caring for children can be practiced both in the classroom and on-the-job.

Transfer of skills. Although often overlooked, skills learned in the workplace can be transferred to family life situations and vice versa. For example, communication skills such as giving directions and listening may be first learned and practiced at home, but later may be used in the work place. In turn, by using these skills in the work place, one may improve at giving directions and listening when interacting with family members. When learning important skills, students should be asked how these skills might be used in the home or work settings.

Ways in which skills are taught and practiced. Skills related to both carrying out the work of the family and becoming employable are taught and practiced in a variety of ways in FCS classrooms. Projects and experiences related to real life situations are an integral part of the FCS program. For instance, students may work individually and in groups to develop and implement a plan for a newsletter, video, web page, or service learning community activities.

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The school's responsibility in teaching skills. An essential part of teaching skills in FCS programs is consideration of the context in which skills can be applied. If skills are taught outside the context in which they can be used, students will see little relevance for their lives. FCS teachers are in a unique position to help learners connect skills with real-life situations in carrying out the work of the family and with becoming employable in the work place. A teacher who poses questions, explores incidents, relates case studies, and ties stories to real life experiences of families and employers, strengthens these connections.

4. How Is Technology Used In A Process-Oriented Curriculum?

The ways that technological tools are used in the FCS classroom vary according to the view the teacher holds of teaching and learning. In the traditional view, the teacher may use computer software for drill and practice, or for single-purpose, subject-specific instructional tasks such as diet analysis or developing and maintaining a spending plan.

In the view that is more consistent with a process-oriented FCS curriculum, technological tools such as the Internet, hypermedia, and e-mail serve as a means for students to gather, analyze, and present data. This approach gives students an opportunity to turn data into meaningful information that relates to topics and concerns relevant to their lives. Additionally, students can collaborate on assignments, giving them new opportunities to interact with others.

Besides incorporating the use of technological tools in the classroom, FCS teachers can also help students examine the impact that technology has had on family life. Students might study changes that one technological tool has had on family interaction over time, and then weigh the advantages and disadvantages of technology on families. It would also be important to examine how families have influenced technology, considering the short- and long-term consequences of various actions families might take related to technology.

When considering the effectiveness of technology tools in the FCS classroom, educators might ask:

- Are the tools used for deepening and enriching students' conceptual understanding?
- Are the tools accessible to all students?
- Are students exposed to a variety of technological tools?
- Are technological tools used as a means to an end, or are the tools driving curriculum?
- Are technological products (newsletters, Web sites, portfolios) combined with other public relations strategies to communicate program thrust to students, parents, administrators, and the general public?

5. Where Does Critical Thinking Fit Into the FCS Program?

FCS programs focus on helping learners address recurring, practical problems of the family. A recurring, practical problem is a broad question of social significance that involves everyday life situations that are complex, messy, and ill-structured. These problems are not easily solved, and require family members to take action based on deliberate, conscious thought that considers the best interests of everyone involved. For instance, one recurring, practical problem commonly addressed in FCS programs is "What ought to be done about food for the family in society?" At first glance, this problem might seem simplistic and unimportant. In reality, food-related problems require complex judgments because there are varying traditions, views, beliefs, and practices connected to making choices in particular situations. Food-related problems are further complicated by social forces that influence people's thinking and actions, such as the media, government, and business and industry.

Solving and addressing recurring, practical problems requires the use of complex thinking processes that should be first learned in the family. These thinking processes must then be learned, reinforced, and used in classrooms. Therefore, FCS teachers have two interrelated reasons for including thinking skills as a part of curriculum. Family members need to learn and use these skills within the family context. In turn, these skills need to be modeled so that they become a part of each family member's life outside the family context. Students can further develop and apply these processes when examining complex, recurring, practical problems of the family.

A critical thinking process that is appropriate for addressing recurring, practical problems of the family is *practical reasoning*. It is a social and intellectual process of inquiry that helps family members arrive at a judgment about the best course of action to take in a particular situation. By learning and using practical reasoning, learners can become more thoughtful and deliberate about taking action in their everyday lives as family members, consumers, employees, and citizens.

In addition to being an appropriate process for use with learners enrolled in FCS courses, the practical reasoning process can be used in the development of FCS courses and programs. For example, the 1996 publication from the Wisconsin Department of Instruction, "Family, Food and Society: A Teacher's Guide," explains how a FCS course might be designed so that the practical reasoning process, along with food-related subject matter, forms the course content. In this guide, critical thinking skills are not viewed as discrete skills to be memorized. Rather, skills such as perspective taking, analysis of concepts, discrepancy analysis, and interpretation of context are woven into teaching and learning experiences designed around the practical reasoning process. In the Family, Food, and Society course, the teaching and learning process focuses on inquiry, the formation of concepts, group interaction, and the development of social responsibility.

Several barriers tend to block critical thinking skills from being incorporated into FCS classes. One of the most difficult hurdles is teachers' inexperience with designing a learning environment that encourages the development of students' critical thinking skills. Some teachers are reluctant to shift their teaching focus from acquisition of factual information to one that is process oriented. Translating critical thinking processes such as practical reasoning into units of instruction requires adding critical questions to lesson plans. But when FCS teachers successfully incorporate practical reasoning into their curriculum, students are more likely to take reasoned action in everyday life problems in a more morally defensible manner.

6. How is Process Content Related to the Rest of the Content in the FCS Curriculum?

Content in FCS programs consists of both subject matter and processes that are interdependent and interrelated. Subject matter in FCS is based on recurring, practical problems of families. The examination of recurring, practical problems within the family becomes complex because each family, and the individuals that compose it, function in a different context.

Because of the complexity of these concerns, "the teaching and learning of intellectual and social processes must accompany knowledge development in order for students to learn to use reasoning as a basis for judgment and action" (Staaland and Strom 1996, p. 7). Additional reasons for incorporating intellectual and social processes into the FCS curriculum are threefold: "to learn the skills needed to study the family, to learn some of the skills used by the family, and to learn skills related to creating an optimal learning environment in the family" (Fauske 1986, p. 271).

Intellectual and social processes, such as generating conceptual complexity, practical reasoning, and perspective taking, can be deliberately integrated into FCS subject matter knowledge at all educational levels. Students' ability to use these processes evolves over time, especially when teachers consider students' past experiences, use a variety of teaching strategies, and constantly encourage the questioning of both subject matter and processes.

For example, when addressing the recurring, practical problem, "What should be done regarding guidance of children?" the FCS teacher could incorporate the skill of perspective taking to assist students in examining different views regarding child guidance. The complexity of the perspective-taking process requires students to use skills such as collecting accurate and relevant data, noting similarities and differences, considering consequences of various practices, and justifying their point of view.

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7. What Kind of Inservice is Required for a Process-Oriented FCS Approach?

The focal point of process-oriented inservice education programs ought to be the personal or professional development of each participant. FCS teachers should be regarded as active agents in their own professional development, collaborating with peers to examine underlying beliefs, values, and intentions about complex concepts which guide their lives as educators.

Inservice sessions ought not be designed along traditional approaches. Rather than attending "one-shot" sessions planned and presented by an "expert," FCS teachers themselves should decide which content to examine and the conditions under which they will learn. Thus, inservice sessions can take many forms, ranging from a series of large group sessions to two or three teachers talking together about a common concern. Likewise, inservice could take the form of independent study. An individual professional development plan created by the teacher in conjunction with an inservice educator could provide for such flexibility.

Establishing communities of learners who might meet over a period of time is an especially meaningful way for some teachers to grow and develop personally and professionally. Learning communities, however, call for a new way of interacting with and talking to others. In such groups, teachers join together with peers to talk in a critical, yet supportive, environment. The role of the inservice educator in this situation is that of a facilitator, who establishes an open, trusting atmosphere focusing on authentic dialogue between and among all participants.

Some teachers find it easier to enter into a community of learners if they can join together with teachers in their own field of study. This can be problematic for FCS teachers in small school districts who might be the only teacher in this field of study. Those teachers should be encouraged to find FCS teachers in surrounding school districts who share their concerns and interest, and are willing to talk seriously and work together over time.

Another way to assist FCS teachers in moving beyond simple, technical change to constant personal self-examination and personal self-development is to support their participation FCS professional organizations. Sometimes teachers need encouragement from administrators or supervisors to become actively involved in a local, state, or national organization. FCS educators, like other professionals, may need reminders that it is only by joining together with others that authentic action can occur.

Finally, if inservice sessions are led by a facilitator or resource person, it is vital that the presenter model the actions that the teachers are being encouraged to use in their own classrooms. Learning about process-oriented curriculum via passive activities, such as lecture, may only result in confusion and rejection of new ideas. By actually experiencing new approaches, teachers are better able to put those ideas into practice.

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8. What Should a Supervisor Look for in Quality Process-Oriented FCS Teaching?

A quality process-oriented FCS classroom reflects a vibrant, stimulating environment that seems "student friendly" as well as respectful of others' ideas, views, and practices. Specifically, this environment is distinguished by the following qualities:

- The classroom is student centered; learners are actively involved in planning, implementing, and assessing meaningful experiences. These experiences should provide a base for small and large group interaction and dialogue leading to reflection and application to everyday lives. The teacher serves as a *facilitator* of learning rather than the "dispenser of knowledge." Teachers provide students, especially those at the senior high levels, with choices of activities that lead them to meet course objectives.

- The atmosphere is one of thoughtfulness, inquiry, and application. Students ought to be engaged in activities that focus on contemporary subject matter as well as processes that promote critical thinking skills. These activities can be varied to address multiple learning styles and intelligences. Helping students move toward conceptual complexity requires the use of activities such as examining various viewpoints, sharing meanings of ideas, and expanding on students' background experiences.

Teachers can help students move toward conceptual complexity by posing high-level questions. FCS teachers should serve as role models for asking thought-provoking questions. Students, in turn, should be constantly questioning their own thinking as well as that of their peers. As students are involved in thoughtful, serious inquiry, they can apply ideas to their everyday lives as family members, consumers, employees, and citizens.

- Classroom learning is connected to the community. Connections ought to be depicted in classroom activities, projects, and displays. Some connections might occur as a part of the FHA/HERO organization. It is important that all students be given varied opportunities to connect with community members, perhaps through interviews, observations, volunteer work, or actual work experience. Whatever the form of the activity, students should examine these experiences through dialogue and reflection under the guidance of a teacher. Perhaps the most important connection to be made is with the students' parents. Parental involvement could include serving on advisory committees, participating in classroom activities, serving as a resource person for a class, or just staying in touch through telephone calls and newsletters.

- Varied and adequate resources are available for both students and teacher. If there are not sufficient materials and equipment to stimulate and motivate students, time and energy are wasted.

- An attractive, inviting atmosphere that is maintained by both students and teachers. Displays, bulletin boards, and other visuals ought to depict a well-balanced view of the curriculum, processes as well as subject matter,

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and diverse points of view. Classrooms should project a contemporary, futuristic program, free of outdated books, materials, visuals, and equipment.

■ A variety of authentic assessment devices, such as rubrics, portfolios, and projects, that are used to determine students' progress.

9. How Does FHA/HERO Fit Into a Process-Oriented Curriculum?

A key resource for improving the quality and relevance of instruction in FCS programs is the FHA/HERO student organization. Like many student organizations, the focus is on personal growth, leadership development, and community involvement. FHA/HERO is unique, however, in its emphasis on the multiple roles of family members, wage earners, and community leaders. The organization invites students to learn and develop practical, real-life skills and talents useful for strong family life, and for entering the work force or going on to college.

Because of its co-curricular nature, FHA/HERO supports and enhances process learning in many ways. First, FHA/HERO activities can be integrated into the FCS classroom. Teachers can develop their own ideas for activities, or use project materials available from the national office. For example, the project *Student Body,* is a peer education program that encourages youth to eat right, stay fit, and feel good about themselves. Another project, *Community Service Award,* recognizes members for outstanding service. As a part of this project, chapter members identify a specific community need and take action by designing a unique service project to meet it.

Also attractive is that FHA/HERO projects, especially those developed by the National Office, promote learning via multiple intelligences. Some students may create an innovative product, others may use their writing skills in new ways, and others may give presentations to groups of people.

FHA/HERO supports process learning through cooperative learning. FHA/HERO activities involve students in cooperative teams, and provide tools (five-step planning process, parliamentary procedure) and experiences (leadership roles, joint projects) that prepare students to be productive team members in a variety of settings.

Along with cooperative learning, students are given opportunities to enter into FHA's competitive events as individuals and as team members. Although the focus of these events is on "high challenge, low threat," students learn to plan, communicate ideas, and take responsibility for themselves. For example, a competition might relate to employment situations (job applications, interviewing processes, writing letters of application) or might provide students with opportunities to give illustrated talks about FCS subject matter.

Finally, FHA/HERO projects are relevant because the standards for assessment are established by employers, professionals in the field, and community members. For example, in the national project, *Leaders at Work In Food Service,* criteria for assessing student work has been developed by people who actually work in the field of food service.

Whether projects are carried out at the individual, family, school, or community level, students can become engaged in real-life learning experiences that fit their interests and needs.

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What Every Curriculum Administrator Wants to Know About FCSE: Part II

Julie Johnson

10. How should parents and families be involved in the curriculum?

Involving parents should be a major commitment of any educational program (Allen 1991). FCS classes provide experiential learning to help students understand and take action on real life issues and concerns. This necessitates a curriculum in which the students are actively involved in learning about their local community and reaching out to understand the global community. As part of that community, parents, families, businesses, and other groups should be actively involved in the FCS curriculum.

Because the "work of the family" or functions of the family is the subject matter of FCS, it is particularly important that the teacher involve parents and families. "Parents' opinions, perceptions and attitudes should not be overlooked during curriculum planning" (Vance and Johnson 1991, p.126). As the primary educators of their children from birth, parents should be seen as valuable partners with FCS teachers as they plan and implement programs.

When parents receive information about the concepts being taught in class, they can partner with the teacher by helping the student complete homework. For example, students may be learning about family work and how family members can take responsibility for work in their family. Students might first come to a better understanding of what it means to be responsible by interviewing family members with questions such as, "How did parents and grandparents first learn the meaning of responsibility? What does responsibility mean to them now? How has their meaning changed over time?" Asking such questions helps students understand and relate to their parents, see connections to their current lives, and understand the concept of responsibility.

Parent-teacher conferences are, of course, an excellent way to talk individually with parents. But conferences are not the only methods. Teachers can keep parents involved through letters. Parents might also receive invitations to a display and review of instructional materials. It could be advantageous to invite parents to preview films or videotapes of sensitive materials.

One FCS teacher reported that her students published a newsletter that they sent to parents, administrators, teachers and other community leaders.

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This experience helped the students use the writing process to learn subject matter. They reported on their learning by writing editorials about issues they had researched. Some wrote summary columns. Students were proud of their newsletter because it represented their work. Parents enjoyed it and many people gave the teacher and students positive comments about it. The teacher found that the newsletter was not only a good learning tool but an excellent public relations device.

Along with parents, advisory councils or committees have long been considered an essential component for all vocational programs, including FCS. These groups can consist of parents, business and community leaders, alumni, and others who might offer advice and assistance. Meeting with this group periodically throughout the year can help teachers keep the curriculum up-to-date. Teachers may also conduct local needs assessments with the help of these groups. Also, committee members can often help acquire resources, and serve as public relations ambassadors for the program.

11. How does FCS curriculum accommodate diverse learners?

Because FCS classes help students learn life skills, all students—regardless of their abilities or backgrounds—benefit from enrolling in these classes. All people live in families or social units that require learning how to develop positive relationships, provide adequately for their physical needs, and work to improve the conditions of their environment and societal conditions.

According to Gardner (1993), all people have multiple intelligences. The FCS approach to learning helps students develop strength in each intelligence. For example, students use their logical/mathematical intelligence in measuring food or figuring the cost of a food product. The manipulation of food, clothing, or other products affords opportunity to use bodily/kinesthetic intelligence. Helping students visualize a three-dimensional product and then bring that visualization into reality is a good way to develop students' spatial intelligence. Cooperative work in labs and small group discussions or project work helps students develop and improve their interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence is related to goal setting, an important component in FCS. By journaling their understandings, feelings, and emotions related to a particular concept, students strengthen their linguistic skills. In addition, students can practice using their linguistic intelligence when they are reading technical directions, an important employability skill. Although musical intelligence may appear less relevant to FCS, some teachers use contemporary music to introduce broad concepts such as caring, positive relationships. Students might talk to their parents about the music they listened to, and compare it to the music of today to identify attitudes and values are implied in the songs. Even children's songs

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are springboards for discussion. No one denies that music makes a significant contribution to human development and learning.

FCS classrooms value and accommodate cultural differences. As local communities become increasingly diverse, interaction with the global community is rapidly accelerating because of mass media and personal access to the Internet. Although people often think of education as helping students to become independent, the best education promotes interdependence within the pluralistic nature of our culture. FCS classes offer many opportunities for students to learn and value the concept of interdependence.

Students in FCS classes learn how individuals and families are unique and how they are similar. They learn that at a broad level the work of the family is similar across cultures; only the context is different. For example, part of the work of the family is to provide safe and adequate shelter for family members. Shelter may be vastly different for the U.S. family, the Chinese family, or the African family. Even in the same country, housing may be very different—rural and urban; southwestern and northeastern.

Students investigate their own culture and traditions from parents and relatives. Sharing this information in FCS classes becomes important for gaining perspectives in problem solving. Students might continue learning about other cultures through Internet activities, videotapes, reference works, and literature. In so doing, students might discover, for example, that families in European countries place more emphasis on energy conservation, preserving the environment, and voluntary simplicity than in the United States. Students might discuss these concepts and take action to incorporate this learning in their own lives.

ESL students stand to benefit greatly from enrollment in FCS courses. According to Bertelson and Smith (1991), "English as a Second Language (ESL) students are often placed in FCS classrooms because the resources found in FCS classrooms are particularly helpful as springboards for learning the English language." Tasks such as shopping for food, using kitchen equipment, examining clothing labels, and using a checkbook provide opportunities perhaps not found in other classrooms, and help students use the English language appropriately in their everyday life. Not only is the learning of these technical skills vitally important for these learners at their stage of language development, it is also an excellent ways to learn about local culture. The presence of ESL students also helps other students gain cultural perspectives.

Students of all intellectual levels benefit from practical reasoning; gifted students are particularly intrigued by the practical reasoning process, its application to real-life problems, and the investigative nature of the work. Used in resolving and taking action on recurring concerns in community and family life, practical reasoning involves ethical considerations that invite students to explore multiple perspectives on what should be done. Answers are seldom so simple that they fit into a right or wrong category. For example, students might investigate the issue "What should be done about child abuse?" by interviewing police officers about

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the seriousness of the problem. They might invite guest speakers or use the Internet to investigate what has been done in other countries and communities. They might read newspapers or periodicals to gather more data. As students research problems, consider contexts, valued ends or goals, alternatives, and possible consequences of actions, they are learning subject matter in addition to strengthening their practical reasoning. One group of students investigating the issue of child abuse developed a brochure that listed options for help relative to abusive situations. It was placed in all the physicians' offices in their community.

12. At what level should FCS be taught?

Traditionally, FCS funding has been tied to federal vocational education dollars that targeted 7th through 12th grades. Today FCS classes are found at the middle or junior high (4th–9th grade) and high school (10th–12th grade) levels. Some of the concepts important to the work of the family are also taught at the elementary school level. For example, elementary teachers help students understand the meaning of responsibility, cooperation, and developing positive relationships, while teaching basic skills in math, science, and writing. They also teach about nutrition and good health. FCS teachers may teach these same concepts within a broader context of work, family, and community.

Using the constructivist theory of learning, FCS teachers build upon the knowledge students have already gained in other classes and in family life. Elementary teachers and FCS high school teachers sometimes work in teams where the FCS teacher brings expertise in nutrition (or some other concept), and elementary teachers bring knowledge of child development at those ages. Some have organized service learning projects where high school students teach elementary students a concept from FCS. In this instance, the older students learn valuable lessons themselves, such as learning about the characteristics of younger children, positive ways to communicate, and caring for others by sharing and working with them.

13. Should cooking and sewing be taught? If so, when?

Research indicates that the public has a very positive image of FCS, but that they often associate it with cooking and sewing (Johnson 1987). Perhaps legitimately, this stereotype began with some of the profession's founding activities and principles.

Ellen H. Richards, founder of the profession, was the first female graduate in chemistry from MIT and a world-renowned chemist who was recently honored with an exhibit the Smithsonian Institution. One of her primary concerns was food safety and the scientific study of food and water (Hunt 1980). These beginnings laid the foundation for further research, and also placed emphasis on the practical application of scientific principles,

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particularly in the area of family resources, such as food and clothing. Later, home economics (now called family and consumer sciences) became more vocationally focused, and FCS classrooms emphasized the occupation of homemaker. As young women prepared for their life role, they were taught to use scientific principles in performing homemaking tasks such as cooking, sewing, child care, care of the home and home furnishings.

Today the context of homes and families is entirely different. Most women are employed outside the home, and men are taking a more active role in homemaking activities. Although families still have the recurring, practical problem of providing adequate clothing for family members, construction of clothing is no longer a priority, and is done more as a leisure activity than a necessity. Although the context has changed, concepts related to clothing that continue to be important in FCSE include selection, care and maintenance, aesthetics, symbolism, and economics (Holloman 1990).

A similar pattern is true for food. The perennial problem of providing safe and nutritious food for family members has not changed, but the context is different. Families often purchase food that has been produced in other parts of the nation or world. They must know how to prepare it safely and how to ensure the good health of their family. Even though the United States generally has a very safe food supply, we cannot always be assured of food safety. Families must take precautions as they purchase, prepare, and store food. Of increasing concern is the prevention of disease caused by improper diet. Because many meals are eaten outside the home, children and adults benefit from learning how to select food that ensures proper nutrition.

As the context of today's families has changed, the focus of FCS has changed. Rather than focusing on perfecting the technical skills associated with using family resources such as cooking and sewing, middle and secondary programs emphasize broad concepts that are embedded in the recurring concerns of families. For example, students may learn about the concept of "responsibility" and its importance in their personal and family life. Learning might center on responsibility and the characteristics of a responsible person. Analyzing this concept, students might generate some characteristics of responsibility. Then they might practice responsibility by engaging in a hands-on activity that involves a technical skill such as cooking or sewing. They may learn that "taking action" is a characteristic of a responsible person. The "taking action" experience could include taking a baked product to a shut-in, or preparing a "heart-healthy" meal for individuals who have high cholesterol or heart problems. It could be used as a service project to show caring for others. At the same time, students might be learning how to read technical materials and how to follow technical directions. They might also focus on management of time and resources, and develop social skills through working with their classmates who have varying abilities and talents. Also, students would be likely to use basic skills, such as reading, writing, math, and science, in completing a project. All of these are important learnings. It is the FCS teacher's job to make students "conscious" of these learnings through questioning and discussion

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so that students truly can identify what they have learned about the characteristics of a responsible person and taking responsibility, or other concepts they are studying.

Students may study the concept of "power" and the use and abuse of power in family relationships. They learn how to have "power with" rather than "power over" people. They may discuss how power in society is unevenly distributed and often used by those with power to dominate the less powerful (Baldwin 1990). FCS students should learn that individuals and families can be socially responsible and can act collectively to bring about social change or alleviate suffering. They may take "responsible" action by determining the needs of individuals who escape abusive partners by arriving at a shelter without any provisions. Physical needs might be addressed by students taking actions that result in learning subject matter and skills related to clothing, food, or another family resource. If children in a shelter need clothing, for example, students might set up a donation site for used clothing, make baby quilts or other items for children, or collect funds to purchase quality clothing from garage sales or stores.

In FCS classes students might also be learning about the importance of family traditions. They learn that this is *communicative action*, the teaching of culture and history to the next generation. This might also involve parents serving as resources to explain quilt-making or other traditional crafts. Students might become involved in a hands-on cooking or sewing project that relates to learning about culture and tradition. The important learning in this case is not "how to make," but rather the importance of culture, communicating that culture to future generations, the effects of culture on our lives, and the differences and similarities among families and people. This is a very different focus than the learning of how to cook and sew.

Will parents and visitors see cooking and sewing if they visit a FCS classroom? Perhaps. But they should look beyond the activity to see what broad concept students are learning, and how this relates to a recurring concern in families. The FCS teachers' plans should reflect the recurring concern and the broad concept; students should be aware of their learning and how the activity has helped them learn a broader concept.

14. How does the FCS process-oriented curriculum meet recent educational reforms, such as Goals 2000, School-to-Work, or proficiency testing?

Goals 2000. This initiative touches many concepts that are important to FCS, such as school readiness, school completion, student achievement and citizenship, mathematics and science instruction, lifelong learning, drug free schools, and parental participation (Nebraska Framework for Family and Consumer Sciences 1995). FCS intersects and contributes to these

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goals in many ways. Effective parenting skills are critical for families to help develop strong healthy children who are prepared and ready for school. Families, for good or ill, provide the foundational skills needed in school and in the work place. FCS is one of the few places where student can learn parenting skills. FCS prepares students to prepare their children. Some schools have special teen parent programs for those teenagers who already are parents, and these are often combined with day-care programs. These programs help to prepare the teenager's children for school in ways that may not be possible otherwise.

FCS students learn to use the practical reasoning process in taking action on critical family and societal problems. The student leadership organization connected to FCS (FCCLA or FHA/HERO) offers programs that build leadership skills and help students contribute to their school or local community.

Many learning experiences in FCS give students practical applications of mathematics and science. Students may learn financial management and planning, food measurement, data analysis and construction of data charts for research projects, life-span demographics, or preservation of the environment. They apply science knowledge by including the chemistry of nutrition and food preparation principles; the biology of human growth and development; the sociology of families and other societal groups; the psychology of human relationships and the science necessary for the wide range of technologies used in the home (Nebraska Framework for Family and Consumer Sciences 1995).

School-to-work. The Nebraska Framework for Family and Consumer Sciences states that "The school to work initiative is a national emphasis on developing a system to help the youth of America in their transition from high school to careers and further learning. The school based activities emphasize career guidance, integration, high standards and personal assessment for all students. . . . A true school to work system must contain three components: school-based learning, work-based learning and connecting activities." (1995).

Besides offering family-focused courses, some school districts also offer career-oriented courses in the FCS department. Where available, career-oriented courses may include food service, child-care for profit, entrepreneurship, and others. These courses provide specific job training and include work-based experiences. Some districts offer career mentoring classes where students are placed with mentors in the workplace as part of a career/employability course offered in FCS. But in any case, FCS develops skills needed in all careers, such as communication skills, positive relationships, management, cooperative work groups, following directions, problem identification and resolution, listening, and other important work skills.

Proficiency testing. With increasing concern about students' basic levels of achievement, some states and local districts have developed standards and proficiency or competency tests to determine how well

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students have accomplished goals that have been deemed beneficial and appropriate. FCS teachers have been part of school and statewide teams that have contributed to the development of these standards. While the overall standards are usually quite general, some states have developed specific subject matter standards, including competency tests for selected FCS courses. For example, Ohio has developed highly valid and reliable multiple choice tests to measure outcomes of two FCS courses, Personal Development and Resource Management. Teachers of these courses can participate in the statewide testing program.

Current FCS curriculum helps students practice the skills requisite for many of the general standards. However, as teachers examine their curriculum to see how well it contributes to student achievement, they should adapt their curriculum so that it positions students to achieve the standards. It is important that FCS teachers continue their involvement in the development of standards and proficiency tests for their states and local districts, as well as the standards for their specific subject matter areas.

15. How should teachers deal with family values and personal issues?

All teachers teach values simply by the curriculums they select, the amount and quality of the work they require of students, and the modeling that teachers do in the classroom (Kohn 1997). As one expert recently asserted, "Like it or not, schools shape character" (Doyle 1997, p. 44). In selecting content and learning experiences for their students, teachers should be cognizant of their impact on students' values and goals. Classroom experiences become important in students' personal and family lives and will have an impact on their future work as employees.

The current philosophical foundation of FCS supports the notion that we should help students become active participants in a democratic society. Further, we should "help students develop into principled and caring members of a community or advocates for social justice (Kohn 1997 p. 432)." Using the broad concepts of cooperation, responsibility, caring, honesty, fairness, respect, acceptance, justice, responsible citizenship and others, FCS teachers seek to have their students explore these concepts and identify the essential characteristics for each. Having students write about the concepts, explain their meaning and then explore other meanings, may be an effective method to broaden their understandings. This learning can be enhanced through personal experiences, literature, case studies, films, and interviews.

It is always more effective when the FCS classroom, other classrooms, and the school reflect these values and not merely espouse them. FSC teachers can model ethical and moral behavior by showing respect for cultural differences, listening to various points of view, and understanding multiple perspectives. In turn, students learn critical thinking processes and learn to identify conclusions and the reasons that support them. This constitutes a constructive approach to dealing with family values.

16. How should students be assessed in a process-oriented curriculum?

One of the important ideas in the teaching of FCS is to use the formula: subject matter + process = content. FCS teachers teach both subject matter and process. Assessment should match teaching. With this in mind, the teacher should plan for the assessment of subject matter as well as the assessment of process, because both become the content of the course.

Authentic assessment is a natural for FCS classes. Because the focus of FCS is to examine the recurring practical problems of families, assessment should determine how well students can resolve real life problems. Appropriate assessment might require students to perform, create, solve, produce, or do something that involves higher-level thinking and problem solving skills. These tasks should be meaningful and "real world" (Herman, Aschbacker, and Winters 1992).

The subject matter might be nutrition, but students might use the process of critical thinking to learn more about nutrition. For example, students might use a recent editorial on the safety of food in the United States. The teacher could pose questions about E-coli bacteria and how food should be prepared so as to kill this organism. These questions would be subject matter questions. The teacher might also ask questions such as, "What conclusion did the author of the editorial make about the safety of food in the United States?" "What reasons did the author give to support his conclusion?" "What assumptions did the author make?" "What language did the author use that might cause emotion in the readers?" These questions are *process questions* and help students use the process of critical thinking.

In FCS classes students use a problem-solving process called practical reasoning to examine critical issues such as "What should be done to preserve the environment?" Students might work in groups to take action in resolving this issue. They would learn subject matter by studying the environment, and then decide on strategies such as recycling or conservation that preserve resources. They could be assessed on the subject matter they had learned, and also on their knowledge of the process. Process questions might include the following "What questions did you ask to resolve the issue?" "What were your initial steps?" "How did you evaluate what you did?" "How could you use this process in your everyday life?" The use of process questions leads students to reflect on their learning and how it applies to everyday life.

Another part of the authentic assessment movement is the use of rubrics. No stranger to family and consumer sciences, rubrics have been used by FCS teachers in the past to help students evaluate products. For example, if a baked product was the desired result of a learning experience,

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teachers designed a rubric that identified criteria for determining whether the product was excellent, fair, or poor. These rubrics were easy to develop because they identified easily described characteristics of an inanimate object; quality was easily determined. Today's rubrics are much more complex. FCS teachers, along with teachers in other fields, are just beginning to understand, develop, and use these new rubrics. These may include criteria for a final product, but also include criteria for processes such as cooperation, working toward common goals, ability to take appropriate action in resolving a problem, and other processes related to completing an activity.

An especially effective tool for student evaluation and progress measurement is writing. Following constructivist theory, students may be asked to write what they know about a concept. After experiencing learning activities that develop a more complete understanding, students write again about what they have learned, and how they might use their new knowledge. Alternatively, at the beginning of a unit, students could develop concept maps that show connections with other concepts; after their learning, they could revise and add to their concept maps.

17. In a process-oriented curriculum how do I know that students are making progress?

Long before evaluating student progress, FCS teachers ask themselves "What were the goals for student learning?" "How did the learning experiences help accomplish the goals?" "Did my teaching facilitate students' learning in such a way that they could accomplish the goals?" When teachers are satisfied that they have done what is needed to help students accomplish their goals, then it is time to ask, "Have the students learned what has been taught?" "How much progress have they each made toward the goals that were set?"

Intuitive teachers make initial assumptions about student progress. A student's facial expressions—an inquisitive look or a frown—may tell the teacher that student needs more help or practice. The statements that students make or the types of questions they ask are indicators of their level of understanding. But no matter how well they understand students, teachers must validate intuitive perceptions. The use of authentic assessments, rubrics, and writing help FCS teachers to measure achievement, not merely a student's knowledge of factual information.

When used appropriately, portfolios of student work are extremely reliable for identifying student progress. Successful portfolios are not simply collections of work; they should be purposeful collections. Students should select work that shows a particular kind of growth, such as the ability to think critically. A student should not choose work for a portfolio merely because the student received a good grade on the work. Helping students learn to select their work for a particular purpose teaches them

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self-evaluation skills. Although it is important for teachers to identify the progress students have made, self-evaluation is an important lifelong skill. In this vein, student may use portfolios as the impetus for writing about their own learning progress. In the past, FCS teachers used student notebooks to show all the work that students accomplished during a particular grading period. The new concept of a purposeful portfolio is one that is becoming used more widely by FCS teachers, and represents a positive step in assessment.

FCS teachers urge students to attend parent-teacher conferences. It is beneficial to help prepare students to share their progress with their parents and to "conduct" the conference with their parents. This model is being used successfully, but the key is preparation.

Another effective method for assessing student progress is to see if they can teach the concepts they have learned. FCS students in one high school held a "coaches clinic" in which they taught sports nutrition concepts to high school coaches. In their presentations, the students had to use the information they learned in a real life experience.

Finally, if there is evidence that students have not learned, the FCS teacher should ask the question, "What changes do I need to make in my teaching to increase students' understanding of the concept?" The problem-solving process works as well for teachers as it does for students.

18. How is choice and censorship dealt with in FCS programs?

Because family and consumer sciences classes may include important and sensitive issues regarding the well-being of individuals and families, it is only natural that parents and community members want these issues dealt with in the most responsible manner. FCS teachers recognize that parents want to review and become involved in the curriculum, particularly when it involves a sensitive issue. With continual involvement of parents and community, censorship problems are usually minimal.

The first step in a preventive strategy is for teachers to clearly and thoroughly understand today's FCS curriculum, how it has changed, and why. This may seem self-evident, but some FCS teachers were prepared before the current vision of FCS was offered. They may need professional development assistance to become more thoroughly grounded in the new paradigm. The more they understand and thoroughly develop their curriculum, and can articulate the reasoning and philosophical foundations that undergird it, the better prepared they are to present today's curriculum clearly to parents, administrators, the school board, and other interested community members.

Sharing information is a key to preventing problems. FCS teachers should continually keep school boards and administrators informed of the curriculum and materials they are using, particularly when sensitive issues

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are discussed. Having a reputation as a responsible teacher who keeps the school board and administrators informed can go a long way in preventing problems.

Teachers should provide curriculum information to parents, outlining what they might expect their child to learn. Parents have a vested interest in understanding and approving the learning of their children in school. Parents should be invited to review the films, books, and other materials their children will use. Teachers may involve parents in selecting appropriate materials, and invite parents to visit FCS classes, and serve as resources. When FCS teachers are discussing sensitive issues, they should send letters to parents, asking them to sign release forms so the teacher can be assured that the parents are informed and approve of the topic to be discussed. If parents disapprove of an issue to be included in a FCS class, teachers may want to offer alternative materials or activities, such as independent or parent-guided instruction on a project where the student could work independently in the library until the class finishes the unit.

Perhaps the most important component of a preventive strategy is simply to *listen* to parents and others who may be concerned about the curriculum. Human nature is such that people (teachers, in this example) become immediately defensive rather than really listening to parents' concerns and their reasoning behind their concerns. Parents want teachers to respect their values and help their children grow in character. It may be that at the heart of an issue is a misunderstanding of a particular family value or the values and perspectives of another culture. It may not be a matter of *what to take out* or censor but *what to add* or further explain. For example, textbooks typically leave out information about religion because of censorship challenges. Although teachers in public schools do not teach religion, parents may simply be concerned that religion is left out of the discussion, and may want teachers to explain that many families use their religious faith as a determiner of the actions they may take.

FCS teachers should listen carefully to parents and work toward reasonable solutions or compromise. Knowing that families may want only a simple change or addition may prevent opposition from escalating. Although there may be occasional questions and concerns about any curriculum, it should be kept in mind that most parents are supportive of the educational system, and see the teacher as a responsible leader of instruction.

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Using a Process-Oriented Approach in Teaching FCSE

Karen Alexander

The focus of the family and consumer sciences process-oriented curriculum is on dialoguing and critiquing to solve recurring, practical problems of the family. By dialoguing and critiquing, students discuss problems and ask questions regarding the contextual factors of problems. Before making decisions about what is best to do, students explore possible solutions to problems as well as consequences of the solutions. In addition, students also seek and apply the appropriate subject matter when solving problems. This process is a method of political/moral action, aimed at promoting enlightenment and empowerment to generate social action that supports and/or brings about needed change in families and society.

The process-oriented approach has several advantages for learners. Specifically, it recognizes the complexity of home and family life, and helps students consider valued ends—*what should be*, not merely *what is*. By recognizing the long-term effects of significant family and societal issues, students prepare for current and future change. Students begin to see the importance of taking a proactive stance rather than passive acceptance of existing social conditions. Most importantly, the process-oriented approach helps students take knowledge and skills and apply them with action to solve practical problems (Boggs 1995).

Three central concepts of using this approach are found in family and consumer sciences. Students must be afforded opportunities to 1) solve perennial, practical problems of relevance to them; 2) take three kinds of action—technical, communicative, and emancipatory; and 3) develop the process skills that underlie the core content of the curriculum. Process skills include but are not limited to critical analysis, practical reasoning, problem solving, communication, value reasoning, reflective dialogue, and democratic social processes.

Classroom Scenario

The following scenario describes an actual classroom experience that took place during a semester in a foods and nutrition course. This teacher set the stage for the success by having a clearly defined goal for the outcome of the course. Students would be involved in the initial selection of a recurring practical problem, and throughout the semester they would plan learning experiences to help resolve it. They were to generate an emancipatory outcome.

As a resource for solving the practical problem, the teacher benefitted from involvement with the local FHA/HERO chapter. A service learning

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activity promoted the development of process skills such as leadership, decision making, cooperation, and communication. The teacher also incorporated these process skills in other learning activities throughout the course. Processes such as critical analysis, problem solving, and reflective dialogue fostered learning and emancipatory actions.

Scenario	**Discussion**
This is the story of a foods and nutrition class at a suburban high school near Cincinnati, Ohio. Many of the students in this class were considered a real challenge. The majority of the students were seniors who merely took the course "to eat" and had little desire to direct their own learning. Additionally, several of them had had behavior problems in other classes.	*Using the critical science approach helps empower students to direct their own learnings. "Eating" was viewed as a fun activity and an appealing reason for taking the course. Student-directed learning is also appealing, and creates true meaning and application of the subject matter.*
One of the major components of the course was to complete the leadership process skill module. To fulfill the requirement of participation in a leadership experience, planning and participation in the in-class FHA/HERO chapter activities (versus out-of-class or after school chapters) would be used. When it came time to plan some activities for the in class FHA/HERO chapter, the class was far from overjoyed, but the teacher didn't give up on the introduction to FHA/HERO because she wanted them to at least discuss some issues that were important to them, hoping that the issues would generate interest in planning an activity.	*FHA/HERO activities are an excellent way to include processes with subject matter. Students develop skills in* ■ *critical analysis* ■ *problem solving* ■ *democratic social processes* ■ *value reasoning* ■ *practical reasoning* ■ *reflective dialogue* ■ *communication skills*
The teacher asked the students, "What should we consider when planning for our FHA/HERO chapter meetings?" With the teacher serving as a facilitator, the class began answering the question by brainstorming some topics for the monthly meetings. One topic that really seemed to be on all of the student's minds was AIDS. So,	*By asking questions and identifying contextual factors, individuals and families can gain insight into larger societal concerns. Examination of larger concerns leads to the determination of significant continuing concerns or recurring practical problems. Once the concerns are identified, individuals and families can*

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the students and teacher did some further exploration as a large group. The teacher helped the students further explore this issue by asking:

- What is our concern with AIDS?
- Why is it important for us to be concerned with this topic and want to investigate it?
- What are some factors we must consider with this issue?
- What questions can be asked that will help to further explain this issue?

Following this first discussion, the teacher then asked the students, "Since there is obvious interest with this topic, can we phrase our concerns in the form of a question or problem to solve?" The students agreed, and with the help of the teacher, posed their question like this: "What should we do to reduce the affects of AIDS on individuals, families, and society?" With this recurring practical problem in mind, the students could then begin to investigate ways to reduce the affects of AIDS. The teacher then moved the students into an inquiry mode by asking:

- What do we need to know about AIDS?
- How will we find out this information?
- How will we know this information is reliable?

The class determined that to find the information they needed to solve the problem they would contact resource people in the community. It was further decided that these individuals could be the guest speakers for the inclass

interpret information to set goals for solving these recurring practical problems. Recurring practical problems stem from discrepancies between what currently exists and the needs, wants, and goals of people who are involved in the situation.

Recurring, practical problems of the family and society have specific characteristics:

- recur over time
- have multiple, far-reaching effects or consequences
- require choice between ideals or values
- are amendable to change so action can be taken (Staaland and Strom 1996).

From the initial analysis of the topic of AIDS, students identified an even more specific societal concern: reducing the effects of the disease. At this point, it was obvious to the students that this was a problem they could work toward resolving. Now the students could begin to identify sources and gather information to resolve the problem.

The individual commitment to resolving a problem is crucial. By dividing the class into smaller groups, all students could be more involved and establish ownership and increase accountability. Further, in small groups, it was

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FHA/HERO meeting. Following the discussion, the students divided into three smaller groups to plan the activities for the upcoming meetings. Each group was responsible for planning a meeting and for contacting the appropriate speakers. As they planned, they answered the following:

- What will be our goals with these meetings?
- What steps will we need to take in our groups to accomplish these goals?

Two guests who were medical personnel were scheduled to inform the students of the facts about AIDS, and to answer student questions such as how to prevent transmission of HIV. The third speaker scheduled was someone who was infected with the virus. Following each speaker, the students discussed:

- What new meanings or insights have you become aware of as a result of this speaker?
- What were your reactions to what you heard?
- What viewpoints do those affected with AIDS have?
- What viewpoints do those not affected with AIDS have?
- Where do such beliefs originate?
- What environmental factors may affect these individuals?
- What social forces or climate brought about the outbreak of this disease?
- What personal factors will now affect your decisions? Beliefs?
- What consequences exist with risky behaviors?

possible to have a thorough examination of each person's goals, values, and possible value conflicts. Small groups can also promote intellectual and social processes that assist individuals in taking reasoned action. "Gaining a sense of control over one's thought processes and actions is necessary in order to take reasoned action" (Staaland and Strom 1996, p. 47).

The information the students received from the health professionals is an example of technical information because it was comprised mostly of facts or "how to" knowledge necessary for preventing infection with the disease. Although the information is necessary for reasoned action, the questions asked help students process the information and communicate with others. As the students discuss the information, they move to the communicative system of action. They begin to investigate shared meanings, beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes; communicate with others; discuss view points; and clarify values.

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- What consequences occur for those infected with HIV?

The third speaker had actually founded an organization called FACE (For AIDS Children Everywhere) from the death of her daughter to this disease. She shared her story of how she became infected by a one-time sexual encounter with a co-worker. As her life progressed, she did not even give that one night a second thought. She eventually married and decided to have a baby. Obviously, she did not know she was infected and unknowingly infected her baby girl. The infant had been seriously ill and was finally diagnosed with AIDS related pneumonia. In disbelief, she and her husband were also tested for AIDS, and the tests revealed that she was HIV positive and her husband was not. After a struggle with many illnesses, the 14 month toddler died in her mother's arms as she was taking her a bottle. As you can imagine, many of the students were touched by this story; some were even in tears.

The speaker then shared information about her support organization and activities it was providing for Cincinnati families. One of those activities was a Christmas party for 80 kids infected with HIV and their families. Because of the paranoia with AIDS, she was having a difficult time gathering funds for the party, especially for the food. The students instantly saw a need and volunteered to help out in anyway possible including adopting some of the families and purchasing them gifts. Their best offer though was to provide some of the food for the party at no cost to the FACE organization.

As the students were interacting with this third speaker, they were also participating in the communicative system of action. They began to understand the relevancy and consequences of being infected with HIV, which leads to an essential process, perspective taking.

Listening to this speaker stimulated students to examine a new point of view. The process of taking another's perspective involves exploration of how different people would view particular events, conditions, or elements of a situation. It also involves learning about another's beliefs, goals, values, and feelings. This process causes thinking to move back and forth between one's own ideas, feelings, and experiences and those of the other individual (Staaland and Strom 1996).

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The project and desire to help became contagious! Other classes got involved with the project. The nutrition and wellness classes researched the dietary needs of children with HIV in order to plan a balanced meal. The FHA/HERO chapter donated all the food and helped to prepare and serve it. The students raised money for the food through donations and bake sales at lunch. Many other people in the school including faculty got involved and helped by adopting small families. Some of the teachers did their own shopping for the gifts while others just pulled out a $20 bill for the chapter to buy gifts. The students really enjoyed going shopping for the clothes and toys. It was unreal how many parents also got involved. They helped with the food, wrapped presents, or just gave monetary donations. In all, the Work and Family Life Program adopted ten families and provided the food for 200 people who often did not get any hot meals because their money was spent on medicine or primary caregivers were just too sick to cook.

As students began implementing the project, important emancipatory level questions asked were:

- What effect will this have on the well-being of those affected?
- What values supported your decision to become involved?
- What if everyone took this action?
- Do any of your beliefs about . . . conflict with your beliefs about . . . ?
- What will be the short-term, long-term consequences of this

As discussed earlier, recurring practical problems are susceptible to change and must inspire appropriate, reasoned action. That is what occurred here. As students worked toward resolving the earlier problem by seeking information, a new problem arose. This problem seemed even more crucial to solve because the tangible effects were right in front of them. Because the problem was authentic and, in this case, emotionally involving, the students were inspired to take action to resolve it. Through this interaction with the speaker, the students began to see the importance of caring for another and expressing those actions. Caring is an example of ethical, moral behavior.

At this point, the students were involved with the emancipatory system of action, which means being proactive in bringing about change in families and societies. They have identified a need in their community and are taking action to help alleviate it. Further, the processes also allowed for subject matter to be incorporated with the project. For instance, as the students evaluated the dietary needs of children with HIV, they were able to study Recommended Daily Allowances, the Food Guide

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project for you? for the children? for the families? for the community?

- How is this action ethically defensible?
- From this experience, how have your opinions and actions changed?

On the day of the party some additional issues arose. The founder of the FACE organization requested that several of the male students stand guard at the doors of the party to monitor the admittance of individuals. Only those families who were invited to the party were to be allowed access to the food and festivities. In the past years, there had been occurences of outside individuals attempting to direct their anger of the AIDS epidemic toward the children and their families. In fact, the previous year the director of the organization had received telephone threats that the food at the party would be poisoned.

This surprised many of the students and made them very angry. They could not understand why someone would threaten these children. Afterall, they were just little kids who had done nothing wrong, and they or their families did not need the added stress of harassment.

From this activity, something special developed for these students. They were allowed to zero in on their concerns. The student interest and freedom to explore ideas led to the planning and execution of wonderful, meaningful activities that provided them with a tremendous amount of growth. Before this project, the class had not been very enthusiastic about

Pyramid, and Meal Planning. Now, the subject matter had relevance to learning. There was a need to know and apply the content of the course.

This would have been an excellent point in the experience to examine attitudes and conscious and unconscious ideas and behaviors. Attitudes develop over time in the process of growing up and experiencing life. Individuals developed them from enculturation, the process by which ideas and attitudes are passed from one group to another. This process begins very early in life and continues over time. These attitudes can be conscious or unconscious as well as healthy or harmful. Conscious ideas are those that people are aware of and can articulate to others. Unconscious ideas are taken for granted, are unexamined, and are not readily verbalized to others. Some individuals may use a situation to maintain power and control over others, as the threat of poisoning the food illustrates (Staaland and Strom 1996).

The enthusiasm for learning and helping at this level is evident in this scenario. Students have become empowered as individuals to take action for the betterment of families and communities. Even the average students and those that were often viewed as "problems" by other teachers were successful by using the critical science approach.

anything except "eating." through the project, students and teacher connected in ways that might not otherwise have happened. When other teachers saw the names of the kids who were most involved, they responded with, "How did you get them to do this? They don't do anything in my class!"

The teacher believed in the students and allowed them to determine their activity level, which was dependent on their desire to participate. If the students hadn't been interested or wanted to follow-up, she wouldn't have pushed it. She would have just moved on to new subject matter that did interest the students. The teacher wanted this to be a learning experience that developed leadership skills, decision making, and caring and respect for others. But, she also wanted this to be something that the students would want to do for themselves and enjoy. After this activity, several students stayed involved with the FACE organization. They helped make panels for the National AIDS Quilt and spent their summer planning additional fun activities for the children like a family picnic and a day at the zoo. Regardless of further involvement, now every time these students hear or read about AIDS and how devastating it is to families and society, they will be able to feel good about themselves because they made Christmas 1994 special for 200 people (personal communication, Karen Alexander and Barbara Davis, 1997).

This activity was successful because the teacher believed in the students and was willing to take a risk. At first, using the critical science approach can be intimidating because it is a new way of teaching and learning. But as teachers and learners become accustomed to the approach, it can rejuvenate a love for learning and increase the level of social responsibility of students. An important point to note is that these students were involved in this activity from the inception. If it had been completely teacher directed, the results would have been remarkably different. Forced activities will not result in emancipatory action.

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Assessment of the Scenario

At the beginning of the semester, the teacher in this scenario had planned for the students to use any service learning project they wanted as the course requirement for an extended learning experience. The requirement was to spend at least ten hours a quarter on a project that extended the learnings, processes or content, of the course to an outside environment. As the students became involved with this project, they were pleased to know that they could use the experience to meet a course requirement, but many said they would have done the project regardless of credit. For the teacher, this was thrilling to hear.

Grades were given on small assignments as the project progressed. The research on recommended daily allowances and meal planning were part of a classroom laboratory experience. The students used this information as a basis for the experience, and then on a small scale prepared the food that they had planned. Students were also assessed by objective measures on the technical information provided by the speakers.

At the end of the project, students participated in self-reflection. They each wrote a paper on the highlights of the project, their specific responsibilities, their learnings and interpretations, with suggestions for the future. Nearly all of the feedback was positive and many students made comments about the meaningfulness of the project to them. A male student said he was glad to have done the project because he would have only spent his extra money on alcohol. A female student said it was the only time in her life that she felt really needed. Another female student said she wanted to continue be involved with FACE because she had fun and knew that her interactions with the children were important. This student also volunteered to make a panel for the traveling AIDS quilt. Additionally, several parents commented on how pleased they were with their children. This was the first time many of these students had taken any action in their community.

Teacher's Critical Reflection

Using a process-oriented curriculum requires teachers to be critically self-reflective. After reflecting upon these learning experiences, the teacher in this scenario suggested certain changes. First, she would have had each student do more in-depth research on the topic of AIDS, especially the nutritional needs of those afflicted. The research could have easily been incorporated into various content units taught throughout the course. For instance, as students were studying the nutritional content and value of foods, small groups could have researched the nutritional needs of AIDS patients focusing on their age, gender, and stage of the disease rather than just the nutritional needs of children with AIDS.

Second, the teacher would have had the students do more self-reflection on their involvement and learnings as the project progressed rather than just

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at the conclusion.This could have been accomplished by scheduling time for reflective journal writing and by supplying them with guiding questions along the way. Finally, the teacher would have had the students further examine power conflicts. Some discussion questions might have been: How does this disease create a discrepancy in the power of the individuals? Who has the power and who does not? How did they get it or lose it? What does race, class, or gender have to do with these discrepancies? How do these discrepancies affect the individuals involved? Why is it important to identify and resolve the discrepancies? How can those discrepancies be resolved? (McClelland 1997).

Curriculum Sample

Like all successful classroom experiences, implementing the process-oriented approach begins with planning. Although the approach may seem daunting at first, most lessons can be made more process-oriented with only simple adjustments. Many teachers already use processing questions and teach subject matter that would be examples of the technical and communicative systems of action. The only thing lacking is the component for emancipatory action.

The following is an example of how a lesson can be developed using the critical science approach. Each of the systems of action is identified as well as appropriate processing questions. The identification of the three systems of action helps the teacher ensure that subject matter and strategies are planned for each level. The lesson becomes a critical science approach when the teacher introduces discussion questions, and students are encouraged to take emancipatory action (Resource Management Resource Guide, Ohio Work and Family Life Program 1993, p. 179-186).

Practical Problem:

What should I do to take responsibility for a global environment?

Objectives:

1. Students will evaluate the impact of environmental issues on self and others in future generations.

2. Students will recognize personal responsibility for use of world resources.

3. Students will plan ways to conserve, reuse, and recycle resources.

Supporting Concepts:

1. Impact of environmental issues on self and others

2. Personal responsibility for use of world resources

3. Ways to conserve, reuse, and recycle resources

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Subject Matter

Technical System of Action

■ Recycling Facts

1. If you don't recycle one aluminum can, it's the same as if you filled that can with gasoline and poured the fuel on the ground. If you do recycle one aluminum can, the energy saved could operate your big-screen television for three hours (Eco Source Catalog, Spring/Summer 1991, Sabastopol, CA, p. 15).

2. If every U.S. home that uses oil heating decreased its average temperature by six degrees, it would save 570,000 barrels of oil per day.

3. The average U.S. home uses approximately 300 gallons of water each day. Almost a quarter of it is flushed down the toilet!

4. In the U.S., we use an average 2.5 million plastic bottles each hour and throw away enough glass every two weeks to fill the World Trade Center's 1,377-foot-tall twin towers.

5. U.S. workplaces discard enough paper each year to build a 12-foot-high wall stretching from Los Angeles to New York (R. Zimmerman 1992). What Can I Do to Make a Difference. New York: Penguin Books).

Strategies

■ Introduce the topic by examining examples of current environmental issues. Identify the issues and consequences of the issues for individuals, families, and society.

Example categories:

- Waste disposal
- Hazardous or toxic waste
- Rainforest depletion
- Ozone layer depletion
- Fossil fuel depletion
- Fresh water supplies depletion

■ Assign each student to find current news articles, posters, or pictures depicting environmental issues.

Discussion Questions:

- *What are the issues identified?*
- *How do they affect individuals, families, and society?*
- *What could be the consequences?*
- *Why then should we be concerned?*
- *How would you rank the issues in order of importance? Why?*
- *How can individual actions influence these issues?*

■ In journals, have the students respond to the recycling facts and then randomly share responses.

- *What surprised you the most about these facts?*
- *How does recycling make a difference?*

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	• *If we are not concerned with recycling, what will our world be like in 10 years? 20 years?* NOTE: Answering the discussion and journal questions helps students to evaluate the technical information in preparation for the communicative information that includes determining value conflicts, setting goals, and establishing valued ends.
Communicative System of Action ■ Further examination of these issues and their consequences helps students understand what prevents families and society form taking action. Once these notions are clarified, students can begin to take reasoned action. Some concepts for exporation include: • shared meanings of environment, recycling, and waste reduction • value conflicts such as recycling vs. convenience • goals and valued ends	■ Divide the class into cooperative learning groups and have each group pick one of the issues identified. Each group will research the issue, explain the possible of effects on individuals, families, and society, and create a list of actions that individuals can take. ■ Groups present the findings to the class. Discussion Questions: • How or why has this issue created such concern? • Why do you think so many people abuse our world's environment and resources? • When have you abused the environment or resources? • What can we do to take personal responsibility for this issue? • How will our actions make a difference? • What would happen if others became concerned and took action?
Emancipatory System of Action ■ Examples of possible actions: • Tour a recycling facility. • Sponsor a poster contest.	■ In cooperative learning groups, students will create a plan of action for sharing this information outside of the class. NOTE: Because the reasoned action taken should be student directed, the

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- Create a display or pamphlet to be exhibited in the school or community.
- Write PSAs for the school announcements.
- Buy goods or materials that use recycled materials in their production.
- Persuade family members to begin recycling.
- Create a recycling center at school or in the community.
- Participate in the legislative process to create new laws and regulations regarding recycling and the environment.

teacher should be wise in making suggestions for action. Additionally, as the level of complexity of the actions increases, the system of action evolves from technical to emancipatory. For instance, touring a recycling facility is an example of technical action because the main purpose of the visit would be to collect new information. By contrast, participation in the legislative process would be emancipatory because the action would lead to creating changes in society.

Evaluation and Assessment of the Lesson:

1. Students will process their actions by reflecting in their journals about their insights gained from participation in their planned actions.

2. Groups will process the outcomes of their projects by answering:

- What was the most successful part of your project?
- What changes would you make if you were to do it again?
- How do you think your actions benefited individuals? families? society?
- How will you incorporate this experience into your future actions dealing with the environment?

3. Students will help develop a paper and pencil assessment by submitting five questions from each group presentation.

4. Students will be evaluated on the effectiveness of the group presentations using rubrics or scorecards distributed at the beginning of the cooperative learning activity.

5. Given a similar problem, students will use processes to resolve the problem.

6. Students will analyze a scenario and identify the system of action used to resolve the issue.

Summary

Family and consumer sciences programs champion a process-oriented approach that emphasizes dialogue and critique in solving recurring,

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practical problems of the family. Through this dialoguing and critiquing process, learners decide upon reasoned action to resolve the problem. The advantage of the process-oriented approach is that learners come to recognize the complex significance of home and family life, and the long-term effects of family and societal issues. It is an approach that helps students prepare for current and future change.

Central to the process-oriented approach are three concepts: 1) solving perennial, practical problems; 2) taking three kinds of action—technical, communicative, and emancipatory; and 3) developing process skills that underlie the core content of the curriculum. When students are encouraged to seek relevant practical problems, participation in learning activities is increased. Using the process-oriented approach, students examine behaviors from a moral/ethical stance, and make considerable contributions to their families, schools, and communities through reasoned actions.

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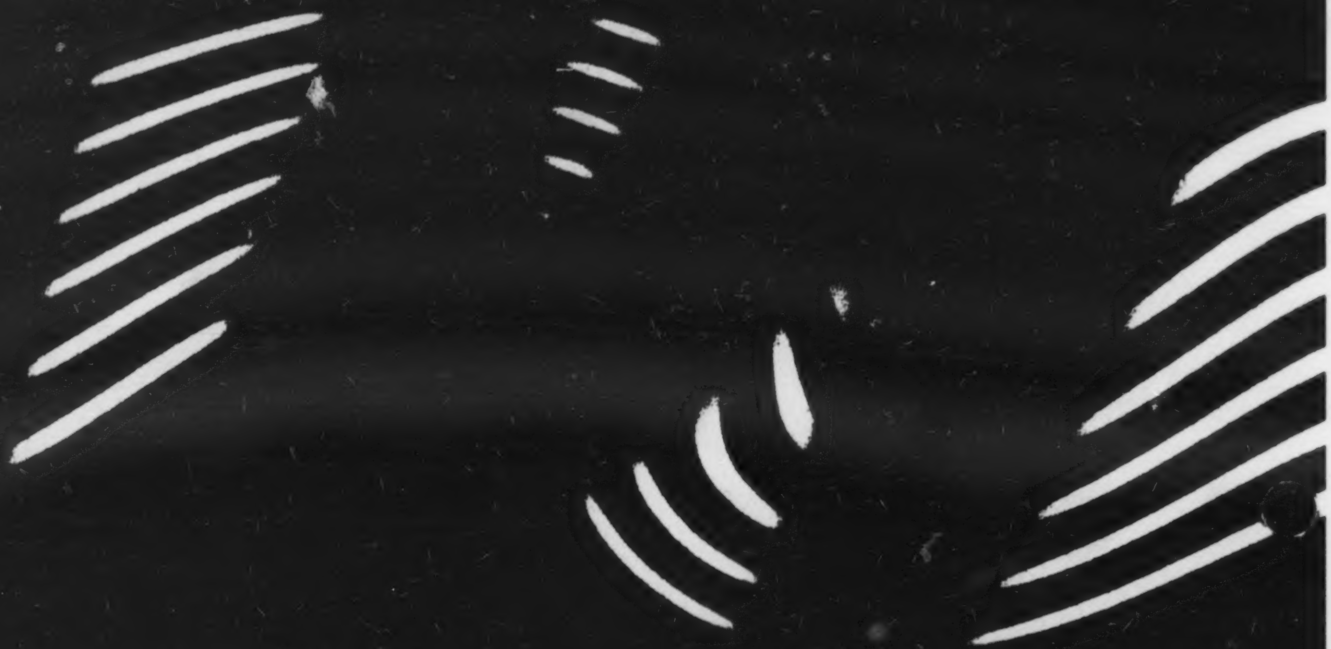

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